

THE \$2500 GERMAN PRIZE NOVEL

AMBITION

A Novel by **BERNHARD GUTTMANN**

It has extraordinary grasp, power, richness. The author knows his period; he can create character; he takes the reader into all levels of society. The book may fairly be compared with **JEW SUSS** for excellence and interest.

—LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Translated by **LUDWIG LEWISOHN**

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

• ESTABLISHED 1817 •

LUDWIG LEWISOHN says of AMBITION

By
BERNHARD GUTTMANN

"This novel is a panorama broad and brilliant, subtle and profound, of the Europe of the Great Elector of Prussia, of the Sun-King of France, of William of Orange and the liberation of Hungary from the Turkish yoke, of the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants, between Lutherans and Calvinists and of the slow but irresistible rise of freedom of thought and of popular government. Here are the wars and the statecraft, the ambitions and intrigues, the controversies and rebellions that lie at the visible foundations of the modern world and the direct results of which are the very substance of our daily experience, both social and political.

"But the author is an artist, not an historian, though he possesses an equipment that the historian might well envy. Hence he has treated his age and his people from within, from their own point of view and has produced a story and characters that are as fascinating and as concrete as though his scene were that of our own day and his people those who live around the corner. Here are the diplomats and kings and parsons and courtiers and serfs and scholars and ways and moods of the seventeenth century brought home to the mind and the imagination of

(Continued on Back Flap)





Read 9/25/45

AMBITION



BERNHARD GUTTMANN

A M B I T I O N

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION
BY LUDWIG LEWISOHN
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON





A M B I T I O N

Copyright, 1930, by
Harper & Brothers
Printed in the U. S. A.

F I R S T E D I T I O N

I-B

PART ONE

A M B I T I O N

★(1)★

AT THE same moment the postilion sprang to the head of the horses, and the two passengers, somewhat stiff of limb, dismounted from the coach. Vigorous men both—the one with the cheerful bold countenance still young, yet neither unscathed by the rainy drive in the uncovered coach. From Wittenberg on it had been pouring uninterruptedly. To be sure, they had wrapped themselves, neck to knee, in the linen covers thrown over the packages in the back of the coach, and under these were their thick traveling-coats. But in the bottom of the coach the water had been gathering. In order not to have their feet in this pool they had to build up little hills of the post-packages and lay their legs across these. But the two-seater was less than man's length and hence they crouched with bent knees and slid back and forth. The ten more miles to Berlin would be no joke in such weather as this. But neither of the men cursed according to the universal custom of passengers, for both were cultivated people and each had long recognized the university man in the other. What they needed was a warm drink. There was no hope of coffee in this little hole of a town, but mulled beer was everywhere to be had. Even as they were about to enter the inn parlor the postmaster came out to meet them.

"Your honors will have to spend the night here. I can't let

the old cart leave till morning. It will never get through the road."

"The devil! I thought the Brandenburg stage was always punctual? We could get stuck just as well in my part of the country." It was the younger of the two travelers in the yellow coat who spoke these words angrily and with an unmistakable Saxon modulation.

"Is your honor the professor from Leipzig? Maybe God provides better weather in the Electorate of Saxony. Here it's been raining these two weeks and the roads are lakes. Two hours' distance from here the river has shaken the foundations of a bridge. It will soon be repaired, however; the peasants are finishing the work tonight."

The older of the two travelers, a tall, vigorous man in a black cloak and very high boots, bowed courteously to his companion and drew the postmaster aside.

"Tell me, my good man, can you get me a mount?"

"Can your honor show me a passport if I am to entrust you with my nag?"

The stranger drew a folded document from his pocket. The postmaster observed the great imperial seal, read a few words, and respectfully handed the paper back.

"A horse shall be furnished you. But does your honor know the roads? It's not long till nightfall now. However, my messenger, who takes the bag with the government mail to Berlin, will be mounting on the instant. It were best your honor ride with him. But can you remount unrested?"

"Surely, surely."

"'Twill be no easy ride. A few hours' sleep at Saarmund. At three in the morning the messenger must remount, for the mail must reach the city's gate at six. Is your honor armed?"

"With good pistols."

"Only to be doubly sure. As a rule, the Brandenburg roads are safe. The coach will bring your portemanteau after you. Your honor can send to fetch it tomorrow night in Berlin at the Leipziger gate."

The other passenger looked on with a touch of envy. But he had no stomach for such hard riding; a gentle academic nag of Leipzig suited his horsemanship. Moreover, he could make nothing of the tall gentleman who had not entered the coach until Wittenberg, having come thither across country from Dessau. Obviously he was a much traveled man and a man of the world—so much was clear from his words. He now approached the professor and raised his hat.

"Monsieur, I am truly sorry to be so soon deprived of your honorable company. But I am obliged to be in the city at an early hour."

He went back for a moment to the stage-coach to open his portemanteau. The gentleman from Leipzig bowed and then entered the inn parlor, minded to quarrel a little with the master of the post.

"And so I am to spend the night in this metropolis of Treunbrietzen instead of reaching Berlin by the time the gates are closed. We left Leipzig yesterday at six o'clock in the morning."

"Your honor has seen for himself that the Elbe and all the other rivers are overflowing. The coach should have been here at eight o'clock. But consider: twenty years ago folks were pleased enough to cover the distance between Leipzig and Berlin in eight and forty hours; nowadays they grumble if ever it takes longer than six and thirty."

"And where am I to lie tonight?"

"I'll try to find a place for you. It won't be easy, for this

is our great market-day. Your honor might stroll down the street to the church in the meantime and see the crowd."

"Tell me, master, who is the man to whom you are giving the horse?"

"The name is Wolff. He must be from Vienna, to judge from the imperial script on his papers."

"Wolff"—that seemed too simple for a man of such appearance. The professor felt cheated, for he perceived that the other knew who he was. The strange gentleman had been very reserved. No conversation had arisen until shortly before they had reached this town. Then the lively temperament of the professor had betrayed him into revealing the fact that his relations with the highly orthodox heads of his university were more than strained, especially since the recent appearance of his quite heterodox treatise concerning bigamy. At this his companion had looked up with a start and had asked, with an admiring inclination of the head, "Then you must be the famous heterodox Professor Thomasius?" But at this critical moment the master of the post had stopped the horses and thus put an end to speech. "Then you must be the famous——" it had had a pleasant sound.

They were having the market at the end of a broad road, on a sandy square adjoining the meadows. It had stopped raining and now, late in the afternoon, the market was a busy place, even though it all seemed but poor and country-like to the cultivated Leipziger who thought of the fairs of his native city. In disordered array stood the wagons of the merchants, with ill-fed horses and some cattle crowded between. The people thronged to the booths, and whoever was not careful trod into slashing puddles. Suddenly the traveler, stopped by a solid mass of people, could get no farther, and peering over the shoulders of the onlookers, saw a red object

on the ground that leaped and spun about. It turned out to be a little boy scarce four years old, who turned successive somersaults in the air, touching the ground neither with his feet nor with his hands. After he had turned six or eight such somersaults a space had been cleared about a huge wagon, such as come to fairs. Here stood a quaint old fellow and lifted up the exhausted child from the wet ground. He must have been a discharged old soldier, such as could be seen loitering in a starved condition on all the roads of the land. His hair was wholly white and in his face there was something of goodness, something almost venerable. He had no shirt, for one could see his bare skin where his long blue coat lacked a button; breeches he had on and a pair of ragged shoes, but a stocking on only one leg, the other being naked from the knee down. This wreck of a blue-coated warrior was pressing tenderly to his old bosom the child in the red doublet, when suddenly out of the wagon leaped a fellow in an absurdly high fur helmet and gave the old soldier, who had not noticed him, a merciless kick in the behind.

"Frieder, thou old carrion, why standest thou here, playing tricks with the brat? Where is my bench, sluggard? Canst do nothing but feed, mangy cur that I drew out of a ditch?"

Eagerly the little boy began to beat on a drum that lay there, while the old soldier jumped to fetch the wooden stool. When he had set it down the Leipziger professor furtively slipped a piece of money into his hand and received a look of thanks as from an old beaten dog. Meantime the quack had mounted the stool, and after absurd bows to the people began to speak with an amazingly glib volubility!

"Highly honored and well-born and most welcome and courteous ladies and gentlemen, that is to say, ye here assembled yokels, clod-hoppers, dung-scatcers, and cabbage-feeders, not

forgetting your incomparably lovely ladies—ye are to know that I, who address you, am in reality a gentleman of most high and noble lineage, educated with other pages in a castle in Bohemia, even as that excellent charmer, my virtuous consort and mother of this red-clad prince, who even now within there on the straw is giving suck to our youngest, is a lady of the highest nobility—and that's the truth, by God. Yet, nevertheless, have I been so smitten with pity of your ignorance and of the many fell diseases that afflict you, that I wander about the land and for but a penny a bottle offer the people my indescribably precious tincture, whereof the secret was sold to me in Constantinople by one of the chief pashas for the small sum of three thousand ducats—and that's the truth, by God. The selfsame tincture is brewed of that most recondite of all plants, *Herba* and is gathered when the moon stands in *Luna* and groweth by the water *Aqua* on the horrible hill of *Mons*—and that's the truth, by God. When this tincture is well applied to the outer skin it worketh the cure of gouty boils and sulphuric exudations as well as of sudden lumbagoes and bone pains. Furthermore, it removeth the itch and maketh the skin of old women to be soft and white. Rubbed into the scalp, it causeth the hair to grow abundantly and overcometh the horrors of baldness—and that's the truth, by God. That ye may be convinced, look well upon me. Hairless was I as an apple, and now am thus." At this he pulled off his huge cap and his locks fell to his very shoulders. Now on one foot he turned about with amazing rapidity like a top, so that his hair flew in a circle about him and the crowd howled with delight. Just as suddenly he stopped.

"Here comes my friend, the highly learned doctor, also called Emperor Matthias. Whoever desireth a good almanac

with all afflictions well prophesied or else veracious news of the world—here comes his man!”

At this there approached a small man in a gray coat held by a girdle. At sight of him a huge giant of a man in the crowd cried out: “*Vivat* Emperor Matthias and death to the parsons!” The small man lifted his stick and beckoned to that other. He himself came no farther forward, but jumped into the big fair-wagon from behind. A few people gathered about the quacksalver to buy his wares; the rest of the crowd dispersed and the traveler entered a near-by inn, being now in great need of a warm drink. While he was waiting, in came the tall fellow who had cried “*Vivat*” on the square, and it turned out that he himself was the innkeeper, being a discharged ensign of the troops of Brandenburg, who had opened a place to sell beer in this little town. He saluted his elegant guest and went over to a long table at which country people were sitting. Serfs they seemed to be rather than free peasants. Wenches, too, were in the crowd, which had already drunk more than a little and was quarrelsome and noisy. The professor soon left in order to find a lodging. Again he remembered what his traveling companion had said. How was it, exactly? “Then you are the famous heterodox scholar Thomasius?” Had that speech had an ironic flavor?

The master of the post informed him that no bed had yet been found. The two inns were crowded with hucksters and other folk; the spare rooms of the burghers were all taken, seeing that the fair was lasting another day. There was one place left, said the man, in the barber’s upper room. But two Jewish traders from Brunswick were already lying there. At the parson’s house, however, which lay behind the moat, the professor would find shelter, if only on a straw sack. It could not be said of the parson and his family that they were well

liked in the place. But the professor would not knock at that door in vain, especially if he were to address the parson in Latin, for the latter was very proud of his learning. It occurred to Thomasius that the tall innkeeper had just wished death to all parsons. The master of the post gave it as his opinion that the former ensign had better guard his tongue if he wanted to keep his neck out of the noose. The ensign and Parson Kabelitz were even now at daggers drawn and the latter had denounced him from the pulpit; the other innkeeper, who had long been here, was a cousin of the pastor's wife. Thence came the rancor.

When Thomasius, accompanied by a lad who carried his portemanteau, knocked at the door of the low parsonage, it flew open immediately and five pairs of childish eyes stared at him. From within a fat woman came forward. Two small children clung to her skirts; her curved body under her short workaday dress displayed her present condition. Like all the peasant women here, she wore a red skirt of coarse frieze, and above it a black bodice to which the skirt was attached by strong hooks. She had no stockings on, but thick leather slippers on her feet. She understood Thomasius's courteous request for a lodging well enough. But she gave no answer, since she could speak only Low German. She called out to her oldest, "Run fetch thy father!" Hereupon a whole troop of children raced across the moat-bridge behind the parsonage, while the parson's wife, attending no further to the gentlemen at her door, went on with her work. It took a long time until the parson finally returned from his field. The professor saluted him solemnly.

"Salutem tibi dico, reverendissime sacerdos. Christianus Thomasius nominor. Lipsiensis sum et hospitalitatem precor domus tuæ." ("I give thee my greeting, most reverend priest.

My name is Christian Thomasius. I am from Leipzig and request the hospitality of your house.”)

Parson Kabelitz did not understand all these words, but he said “*Salve!*” and beckoned the stranger into the house. He called out to his wife that she was to get the small room ready. The people were evidently poverty-stricken and not prepared for guests. The woman distributed ear-boxes to several clamoring small boys right and left, and led the guest into a room where there was a pallet of straw. She ran to fetch a blanket. There was nothing else in the chamber, which seemed scarcely good enough for a servant. The professor reflected that his hosts were not putting themselves to much trouble. Cheerfully enough, however, he slipped out of his damp cloak and shoes, drew from his portemanteau a romance of the kind of which he read many, and stretched himself out on the pallet. He tried to read, but fell asleep at once. When he awoke at the end of an hour it had grown dark, and Parson Kabelitz, holding a lighted pine-torch in his hand, stood beside his couch. The parson had doffed his dirty doublet and slipped into a coat. He held out toward his guest a small basin with water; the family washed at the cattle-trough. Having washed, Thomasius was conducted into the study, where he stumbled over sundry garden tools on the floor, but where, save for a thick Bible and a couple of unbound hymnals, no literature was to be seen. They sat down and the conversation dragged. For the parson, who lived like a poor peasant, had wholly forgotten the ways of educated people. But when Thomasius related that he had taken his doctorate at Frankfurt the parson became enthusiastic, since he himself had spent the merry academic years of his wretched existence at that Athens on the Oder. From now on he addressed Thomasius not otherwise than as “Sir brother.” Suddenly he ran into the kitchen

in order to complain because food had not yet been brought. There arose shrill female clamor and one could hear the parson's wife bitterly reproaching her husband for the expenses occasioned by the guest. At that moment Thomasius saw several faces peering at him from the door. He hastened forward and took hold of the oldest three children. He was pleased at this circumstance, not desiring to ask outright for his reckoning, as at an inn. Into the hand of each child he placed a crown, wherewith they instantly rushed to their mother. Now the clamor ceased. The parson came in with an earthenware jug of spirits; his morose wife brought a flour soup, black bread, and a side of bacon. The poor parson was not accustomed to dining so nobly. He took one drink of spirits after another and thawed out.

"Ah, Doctor, you've given the children all that money. May God reward you; 'tis more than I can do. Sir brother, a servant of God of the true Lutheran faith leads but a poor life here in Brandenburg. Aye, if one were in a rich and pious city like Leipzig! Come, good brother, drink another *spiritus cornus* with me. 'Tis not often that two old Frankfurt grads sit thus together. A poor devil I was there as well, but ever merry. I was a sizar, got my lodging and my food at the professor's house, and if I collected his fees for him without mercy, he gave me a thaler twice a year. Today I haven't a farthing in my pocket. In Frankfurt I said to myself, Ah, when once I'm a parson and have got me a wife! Well, here I am; aye, I have the calling and the squalling. Do you take me, Sir brother? God's blessing is in many children—one comes a year and all have mouths to feed. *Summirum summarum, in dungo sum*, good brother. Drink!"

"But the town seems to have a good market. I saw many people today."

"The lousiest scamps in three counties—those who gather here. Did you see any but rogues? There's a drunken cornet or ensign keeps a whore's inn, frequented by none but mangy heretics and flee-bitten serving-folk who are rebellious and lazy. 'Twas but the other day that the sharp command came from Berlin: All serfs and villains are to work where they have been littered; if they escape and are caught, the law will be had on them. Naked idlers, who would feed without work! I work myself to the bone and do enough for two. I have denounced to the prince's officers more than one who hid himself at the inn and wanted to flee for more money elsewhere. But if wages rise and the serving-people become more insolent, how is the land to exist? It is forbidden to give the stubborn dogs more than is prescribed. The neighbors are injured and the nobles and high persons complain. But it is a treacherous folk, that desires not to obey the government, nor were they properly guided for long. What is the parson here for? But do you know who my predecessor was? 'Twas a tailor who baptized and buried here and the clodhoppers clung to him. At last came an inspection from Berlin. The gentlemen found out what a luminary that was. So I was sent here."

Thomasius drew money from his pocket and proposed that a pitcher of beer be sent for, since conversation dries the throat. A serving-man was summoned and sent out with a huge jug, the parson impressing it upon him to go to the good innkeeper and not to that snutty brazen-throat. The serving-man remained long. But at last he returned. The parson accused him of having guzzled some of the beer, since the jug was not full. The elderly, furtive-looking fellow had indeed taken a vigorous draught. But he lied, saying there had been no beer left at the good innkeeper's; he had had to go to the

other, whose measures were false. As he withdrew, Thomasius observed that the man's face was both secretive and cheerful. He himself drank little. But the cleric, whom the spirits had already heated, quenched his thirst well. The good years of his youth in Frankfurt whirled in his head.

"Didst play thy pranks too, brother? I was a student of the good old kind—believe it or not! We poor theologians had no money for drink. But the coddled burghers' sons had to pay our reckoning, else had we gelded them. After the carousals upstreet and down we went and sang to the moon, and if the townspeople stuck their stupid sleepy faces out of the window, they got a good drink of dung water or even worse. How were the charmers in thy time? Thou must have come eight to ten years later than I. I let nothing pass by me; wenches there were and serenades. Heighho, lass, was the slogan, of what good is a fiddle unless a bow plays on it? Now my delight grows bitter. Every year my old woman is in child-bed."

This conversation was not very agreeable to the gentleman from Leipzig. To change the subject he asked Kabelitz whether he had no hope of receiving a call to a living in Berlin. The parson grew violent.

"They'll have none there of any true Lutheran of the old faith. What is Berlin today, brother? A sink of Jews and heretics! Whoever is driven out elsewhere the Elector receives in his city. He is, alas! of the reformed religion and the land is flooded with the Calvinists, whom the King of France expels from his dominions. Our most gracious lord gathers them all into his arms. I'll not say but what the King of France is a swinish Papist. But what he does to the Huguenots is no devil's work. They are worse than the Pope, who at least clings to the vicarious atonement, whereas in the shame-

ful catechism of Calvin it is written that they need not and will not believe that Jesus died for them. To the Crucified they say, The Lord call Thee Satan! Is that not gospel, Brother Thomasius? Thou art a professor and shouldst know."

"I'm only a jurist. But I perceive clearly that you are a true priest, even to the letter of the law."

"Idolatry is in the land! There are a few true men of God left in Berlin, like Heinzelman. But their mouths are gagged. They are not permitted to denounce the devil-worship of the Reformers from the pulpit. The court forbids it. But, brother, how shall I honor the true faith if I am not permitted to denounce the false? I'll say nothing against the Elector himself; he was born and educated in the Calvinist heresy. But his wife, the woman from Holstein, who was nursed from the sweet paps of Lutheranism and was a widow and changed her faith only to please the Elector—what sayest thou of her? But I'd better hold my tongue, or I might prate myself to the gallows. But the Lord our God is not dead; He's proving what she is to the knowledge of all men, brother. She has a medicinal draught that makes very quiet them who drink it, such as, for instance, the sons of the Elector's first wife, who must take the little draught and die, in order that her own sons may inherit the land."

At this moment there was a knocking at the outer door. Both men were taken aback and fell silent, fearing that they might have been overheard. But there was no one at the door; only a piece of paper lay there. When the parson picked it up, one heard laughter out of the darkness and the steps of one who ran away. They read the paper in the room. It was a printed broadside, such as were hawked about at all markets. At the top a rough woodcut represented an evangelical

cleric with robe, and Bible. Beneath were printed these verses:

I who preach Christ do live full well
And seek all things agreeable,
Like our good Father Luther, who
Loved much to eat and drink and woo.
And so we Lutheran parsons right
Use cup's and platter's and bed's delight,
And with our bellies full and warm
Rest peacefully in woman's arm.

Thus it continued for several dozen broken-backed lines. At the very bottom the author described himself and his production thus: "Given under the hand and seal of Frederic Lord of Reason in his castle of Conciencbury in Freeland in this year."

Thomasius could not help thinking at once of the curious expression on the serving-man's face. The parson roared: "I'll run straight to the market-place; the varlet must be there!" He ran into the kitchen in order to put on his shoes. But there his wife, who had waited for him, received him with screams and jeers. She wanted to know whether he was so drunk as to go among that low crowd again and come back black and blue all over, as he had done but the other day. In a subdued frame of mind he came back into the room. But Thomasius had had his fill of the man's company. He said that he would himself walk out to see what was happening on the market-place; perhaps he would find the rascal. Kabelitz agreed.

"Aye, do thou go out and look for the rogue. Tomorrow morning early I'll fetch me the constable and get hold of this scribbler and see whether this be still a Christian country. Step on the stones in the narrow road or thou'lt slither into the dung. On the highroad there's light enough tonight."

The first person upon whom Thomasius came on the high-road was the old soldier, Frieder, drunk as a lord, hanging on to the corner of a house. Everybody had stood him treat today. The aged tramp mumbled and crooned with his toothless mouth. But when he espied Thomasius he recognized at once, despite the fog, his benefactor of that afternoon and took hold of the professor's arm, partly out of friendship but also to grasp this opportunity of securer locomotion. Thus united, though forced often to stop, they made their way to the end of the road, where a brilliant fire of pitch announced the market-place. Between standing still and groping forward Frieder recounted in fragments to his most dear new friend the desperate course of his life. He told how, in a time now very far away, he had been born in Alsace. In those days the great German Thirty Years' War had been but a very young devourer of land and of men. He had run away from home and become a horse-boy to the Duke Bernhard; had served with the Swedish dragoons under General Torstensen. Ah, that was a man! Couldn't walk a step; they carried him about on a board; despite gout and board he was like the devil after the Emperor himself. Thus half a century of German misery passed before the eyes of Thomasius. But finding the narrative too long, he asked how long Frieder had been wandering about with the quacksalver. At that a look of rage came over the old man's face. He would murder that scoundrel some day; the man was a very hangman who beat his wife and children half to death and was never sober; were it not for the doctor and his books, there would be murder in the wagon. Thomasius then inquired after this doctor. Frieder grew mysterious. That wasn't his real name. They called him doctor or Emperor Matthias in jest, or Sir Reason. No one dared call him by his right name. But as for himself, Frieder,

he didn't mind telling the name right out to a good friend. The man was from Holstein and his right name was Matthias Knutsen.

Thomasius stopped in astonishment. Years ago, when he himself had been a student, this Knutsen had occasioned a scandal at Jena, of which all Germany talked. He had suddenly appeared, and in the very churches had scattered about his writings in which he had proclaimed boldly the most insolent atheism, so that the pious university had been shaken with horror. Openly had the atheist dared to sign his name. They hunted him eagerly. Once more, a few weeks later, he was seen. But he was never apprehended and had been in hiding since. To think of coming upon him at a county fair! Thomasius burned with curiosity and followed Frieder, who led him into the inn of the fat ensign. They found the parlor empty. But through the open back door they went into the courtyard and, having crossed it, found themselves in a low but roomy shed where there was a light and where people were standing. About thirty persons seemed to be waiting for something; there were women among them, too. With some surprise they regarded Thomasius. Then the ensign approached him and shook his hand as with a bear's paw; the man was half-drunken, nor were the others sober. Against the back wall Thomasius beheld on an old wheelbarrow two lit candles stuck into the necks of bottles. Beside the barrow sat Matthias Knutsen, conversing with two men. Suddenly he raised his stick, which had a head like a small iron hammer, and struck the barrow therewith. The crowd fell silent. Beside the wall of the shed was an old box which Knutsen thoughtfully mounted. Now Thomasius recognized him well: a small thin man, all brown—brownish his face and his uncovered

hair, brown the long narrow braided coat, brown the boots. Now he spoke.

"Ye men and women have come to hear me; hence I speak. But I tell you at once that my sermon is nowise like the parson's, though I am one, too, if that pleases you, and even a doctor of theology. I can even assure you, most devout congregation, that I grew up in a church in my homeland of Holstein, where my late father plied the trade of an organist. Seeing me thus at fairs, ye may well think: Aha, that parson was probably a guzzler and whoremonger, expelled from his pulpit. Nay, brethren, this same parson was not expelled, but exiled himself into the wilderness through the compulsion of a high master the which is yclept Conscience. It is this, my conscience, that bids me to reject what I believe not and to declare what I believe. Therefore I cannot sit in a warm living like my Lutheran brethren, who sleep with their wives and grunt hymns through their noses. Yet am I not alone. Nay, my Conscience-People of the glorious new church of the human conscience are already to be counted by the hundreds, yea by the thousands, in Germany, France, Poland, London, Holland, and in Rome itself. I praise not the Pope of Rome. But the Lutherans who call him the devil's sow are often themselves the worse beasts. Have ye never heard of any parson and preacher who is like a blood-sucking leech to the poor, denounces serving-people asking a better wage, and is, moreover, a glutton, so that the tears in his eyes during his Sunday sermon arise from his having studied over a jug half of the night before? But the Conscience-People are about and increase daily. Were not the first Christians but twelve in number? Like them, the Conscience-People will one day fill the world. For another time cometh. Take courage!"

Here one who had trouble keeping himself erect thought

the discourse at an end and tottered noisily out. There was laughter, but the ensign roared for quiet and the people turned again to the speaker, who stood seriously before them. He continued:

“My friends, man has but one light, and that is an inner light and is called conscience. It is our kind Mother Nature who has implanted this conscience into our bodies to teach us that we are to live honestly and to injure no man and to give unto each his just due. If we do this, conscience leaves us tranquil. If we do it not, conscience torments us, more apt at that than ten torturers. I have my heaven and hell within me and need not the parsons’, nor their God or devil. Your Conscience-man lives like a god himself, but believes in none. Are ye trembling in your boots? Aye, I believe in no god, nor in no devil, neither. Brethren, these be fables to frighten you with that other life, in order that ye may be easily ground into the dust in this. I tell you there is but a single life, and the death of the body is the end of all. Hey, there, little peasant or tailor or serf! Your parson tells you another story. He swears on the Bible. I have myself read not a little in that fat book. If the Holy Ghost dictated it, he must have done so before he fell asleep, for all that is written therein is but folly and contradiction. It says that a man cried to the sun to stand still, and it stood still. An old Jew named Moses stretched out his stick over the sea and it turned dry so that my lord Jews could pass on dry ground. Out of such Jewish fables is your Christianity made. Your Christians call themselves the baptized; they might better call themselves the cozened. For Christ, their God’s name, means the anointed in German, and what salver or quacksalver was not a cozeners yet? Let them believe that anointing will save them! Not I! Aye, brethren and sisters, if they hear me

the gallows will be my portion. Is there one here who would like to betray me, even as Judas betrayed Jesus? If there is such a one, I'll drive a nail into his conscience to torment him till he fills his grave. More than once I have escaped the gallows by but a hair's-breadth. Yet I cannot leave off doing what I do. I proclaim to the world another and much better scripture which all men carry about with them, and that is their reason. Whoever contemns this scripture contemneth himself. And if we believe in no God, what need have we of these so-called houses of his? Close the churches, but destroy them not; tear them not down, but turn them into schools! I say that all priests and governors are to be driven out of the world; we need them not! And how will it be with men and women when there are no more parsons to bless their fleshly intercourse? My dear Conscience-People, I will tell you a secret: the right of men and women to be with each other is no right that the parson gives us; 'tis the gift of our great Mother Nature. What is called holy matrimony and what is called sinful love—between those two there is no difference. Before the bar of reason and conscience they are one."

Matthias Knutsen drew a deep breath and passed his kerchief over his face, upon the dark skin of which either his enthusiasm or the light of the candles had made a glow to appear. The people kept very still. They felt that he was about to end.

"I tell you that conscience and reason will establish a better government in the world than emperors and electors with all their priestly hordes. When I was born the great war, whereof ye have all heard, had not yet come to an end. Look at old Frieder there! He went through the war and did his share of stabbing and slaying and robbing and

such-like things. Eh, old sinner, in this great war the Christians slew one another, the while their parsons intoned pious songs. The slogan was: Lord, give us the victory and let thy sulphur rain on the others! To be sure, this war came to an end. But others arose and of the burning and murdering and robbing and all shameful things there is no end. How many years is it since you had the Swedes among you again, who flayed you, poured dung water down your gullets, raped your women before your eyes, burned your grain, devoured your cattle, and buried you and your brethren halfway into the earth in order to throw stoneballs at their heads in sport? Such is the good order that God keeps in this world. But reason and conscience will help us, and to these two is added a third thing, which is knowledge. For it is out of ignorance of the world that the people deliver themselves like sheep into the hands of princes and officers and parsons, to whom everywhere poor honest mechanics and peasants, menservants and maidservants have to give their bitter sweat and blood. Therefore I say: do ye all learn to read! Aye, to jeer at me they call me Emperor Matthias and Sir Reason. But, truly, I am the emperor of the Conscience-People, and though I fare homeless through my realm now, and though my flag fly only at fairs today, the time will come when it will wave over all lands. And if I am an emperor I must needs have a chief-general, and to that office I appoint the schoolmaster! Ye must build schools—schools, I say—and give the masters a good wage. For schoolmasters are fellows who can make men out of wild beasts and turn a whore into a virgin. For I tell you that knowledge is salvation! And now I will show you the army of my empire.”

From the little heap of books on the barrow he took a folded chart in a pasteboard cover and unfolded the chart.

The people laughed, for the chart bore nothing but the letters of the alphabet in huge rude printing. Knutsen was merry, too, and waved the chart to and fro.

"Laugh not too heartily, good people; this is a serious matter. These be my life-guards and regiments whom ye must follow. A simple German A B C, ye think, wherewith some schoolmaster teaches the little children to read. But these five and twenty are all major-generals and colonels who can conquer the world. They move together and become words, and of these words books are composed, and whoever can read these books is as good as any count of the empire. Beyond this I have nothing to tell you except some rhymes, which I give you to keep on your way. These rhymes were made by a brave woman, whose name was Anna Hoyers, and she was a wealthy farm-wife in my homeland on the Danish border. The Lutheran parsons drove her forth and she died in bitter need. This woman wrote:

"Help the truth be and speak out free,
Your tongues let no man bind!
Cleave ye to truth, both man and youth,
And let none lag behind!

Fare ye all well!"

Once more he swung high the chart with the letters and jumped down from the barrow. At the same instant the ensign, who stood beside him, blew out both the candles and opened a door in the back of the shed, through which he let Knutsen, but no one else, escape. Obviously not all in the crowd were to be trusted. Silently the people groped their way through the darkness back into the open. Thomasius was beyond measure astonished. He was considered a dangerous hothead by his Leipzig colleagues, because he wrote Latin books concerning natural rights as these were conceived of by

the learned Grotius and the learned Puffendorf. He had never dreamed it possible that one could step forth thus and in plain German, understandable by any baker's journeyman, preach naked atheism and rebellion. It seemed to him that all the fire-bells in the country should be set a-ringing in order to start the hunt for a rebel like that. But then he heard a voice which asked him, this time with a noticeable tinge of irony, "Are you the famous heterodox Professor Thomasius?" He determined to say nothing of the scene he had witnessed to Parson Kabelitz. Luckily, he found that worthy snoring on a bench in the hall of his house and slipped past him into his room. When morning came there was no time for talk. The stage-coach left at six.

★(2)★

THERE probably never was an ambassador more in love with his profession than was M. Rébenac during his Berlin days. He was pleased with himself every morning when he entered his study. Always his glance rested first upon the two gifts of his grateful sovereign—the black Italian desk and the red marble inkwell with an L and a crown engraved upon its golden lid. Never would he have dreamed that, after a youth as tumultuous as his own, he could have sat down with such pleasure to his daily work in the same room. And he had now been for almost six years in this barbarous Berlin, of which to this day and in spite of the fame of the Elector, Paris did not know whether it lay on the hither or the farther side of Poland. He himself had not known it, either, until that lucky day, ten years ago, when the court, at the pleading of his friends, consented to give him a trial. He was first appointed military observer with the armies of the Swedish ally, who was then at war with Brandenburg. M. Rébenac de Fouquières had been very hazy as to the location of that province of Pomerania, whither he was ordered to go. He first drew his traveling expenses of two thousand thalers and passed several very pleasant weeks in Paris. Had anyone betrayed the fact to the king that he was still there, it would have fared ill with him. He succeeded in leaving at

the right moment and by a very round-about way reached the city of Stralsund, which the Electoral Prince was besieging. Since those days Rébenac had become almost learned in the geography and politics of these dark regions and had even attained a fair command of German. It had happened more than once, to the intense annoyance of the chief secretary, Croissy, that, when important matters concerning the huge territory between Copenhagen and Vienna were at issue, the ministerial documents had borne the command in the royal handwriting, "M. de Rébenac is to be asked to report." Hence the Marquis Colbert de Croissy was not overfond of the ambassador in Berlin. But what was he in fact but a chancellery scrivener who transmits the commands of his master? The king read all dispatches that came in; he decided the character of all replies.

Not even the untoward happenings at the Berlin court could darken his cheerful mood. Rébenac was convinced that he could keep the aged sovereign of this country true to the flag of France; for the Elector was a sober-minded man, and being aware of his own advantage knew as well as ever that he had more to fear from the Holy Roman Emperor than from Louis XIV. The ambassador rang for his footman. Where is M. Poussin? M. Poussin has gone out and has left no word. There was nothing that Rébenac could do, not even scold; his secretary, Poussin, constituted a peculiar case. He had been in Berlin nearly as long as the ambassador himself and was an initiate in all diplomatic secrets. Yet one could never know whether he would not resign quite casually that very evening. In spite of that, Rébenac was very lucky to have him. For the man was no simple scrivener, but one of the cleverest young jurists of Paris. The son of an eminent notary, he had had the ill luck to conceive a violent passion for the

wife of a silk merchant; the lovers were caught, the bourgeois family made a great outcry, and Poussin, who took love as seriously as the romantic knight Amadis of Gaul, went into exile. He was offered to the ambassador at Berlin and arrived in a mood as sour as vinegar. On the second evening he appeared in the study: "M. de Rébenac, I have the honor to resign. I'm going to Italy tomorrow. I don't like my employment; I am no copyist." That midnight Rébenac had knocked at the secretary's door: "Poussin, you may do as you like tomorrow; tonight as the representative of your king I must ask you to help me. I have no one else; I have written thirty pages and have a cramp in my hand." Poussin had sat down and taken dictation until morning. They had slept until noon and then continued their work. Thus they had gone on since then. Poussin had had several later accesses of rage, but had always put off his departure. He had to be treated with great care. But he was a model assistant who knew everything, remembered everything, but did not intrigue or write letters to Paris to be played into the hands of Mme. de Maintenon, as happened constantly to other ambassadors. He took no interest in his small wage; his father sent him money enough.

Poussin entered and Rébenac spoke first.

"Good morning my dear fellow. You come in the nick of time. I want to talk to you before composing my weekly reports. Any news in the city?"

"Yes; two enemias were administered to the Elector yesterday. They have eased his condition."

"Excellent, but hardly matter for the report."

"Why not? A king who has bowel trouble may take a legitimate interest in the hemorrhoids of a fellow-sovereign."

"This is your caustic day, Poussin. Did anything annoy you on your walk? Did you go as far as the gate?"

"No; I went to the public gardens."

"Had the gate-keepers any news? Did important strangers arrive?"

"A few hours ago there came in one on horseback by the Leipziger gate who might well deserve your attention—Father Wolff of the Austrian party."

"And you don't tell me that until now? I didn't know he had left!"

"Neither did anyone else. He must have been on a secret mission."

"Not at all improbable. All the gate-keepers of Berlin are in my pay and I get no information."

"He went as he came, on horseback. Rather, he left the gate on foot as though taking a casual walk. But at half an hour's distance a groom was waiting with a horse. I am told that he has often left the city in the same manner."

"Indeed! When were you told that?"

"Half an hour ago. Your little red-haired lackey, August, came and told me that he had met a great friend of his, the groom of Baron Fridag. The groom had had orders to wait by the gate from early morning on until the arrival of Wolff. I told August to bring this friend to see me at once behind the public gardens, where there is no one at this hour. I am convinced that Fridag bribes the servants in this house. Why shouldn't we return the compliment?"

"By all means. And don't forget to give little August a thaler."

"As you like. I have long been giving him little sums for the pleasure of it. The boy is no fool."

"Where do you suppose Wolff has been?"

"It is certain that he came by the Leipzig stage. But the coach had an accident yesterday and had to remain in a little town. Wolff was unwilling to wait, but rode hither over the dreadful roads by night in the company of a messenger of the post."

"So he was not in Leipzig?"

"I don't know. In Fridag's stables the aim of his journey is of course unknown. He may have been even farther."

"Let us consider! Quite by chance I happen to know that on Sunday Wolff was dining with Baron Fridag. In the ante-chamber, in jest and also to boast of his strength he lifted up a chair on which a page was sitting. My old friend Fuchs was present and told me about it."

"Aha, that old friend of yours!"

"My dear fellow, I am not in the least deceived concerning the part played by Herr von Fuchs. Never mind that! He may change again; for very good reasons he is not unapproachable. Let us assume, then, that Wolff left immediately after dinner last Sunday. He couldn't have reached Leipzig until Tuesday. Today is only Friday; hence he must have left Leipzig early on Wednesday morning. He must, therefore, have had a conference late on Tuesday with some one who was awaiting him. Frankly, Poussin, I see through it all. It concerns the alliance against us which Vienna is trying to brew with all the princes of Germany. This alliance is not of the slightest interest to us so long as the Elector of Brandenburg does not join it, and I know with certainty that hitherto Fridag has been at him quite in vain. So it's clear that he sent Wolff to Leipzig in order to inform some South German agent that my old Frederic William is recalcitrant. Bravo!"

In his excitement he jumped up. Curious how favorably these conversations with Poussin always affected his ability

to think. Even though Poussin said little, yet his critical presence was like a living wall that sent back elastically the ball of thought. His most excellent reports had originated thus. Now Rébenac stood still.

"Poussin, I can see your thoughts. You disapprove of my making hypotheses. Quite like my dear father, His Majesty's ambassador at Madrid, who often said to me: Assume nothing. It is the business of a diplomat to combine known facts by logic, not to suspect unknown facts. Am I right, my friend?"

"My humble opinion coincides exactly with that of the Marquis de Fouquières. As a jurist I know how much misery is caused by clever assumptions. Fifteen years ago a woman in Paris was broken on the wheel as a murderess, on the basis of a delightfully perfect dossier of circumstantial evidence. Two months later her innocence was irrefutably established."

"Politics is more akin to war than to justice. In the field, too, each step is carefully considered and all possible information is gathered. But gaps in the information must be filled by hypotheses, else one could never proceed to action. A too prudent general is defeated."

"Father Wolff is an interesting man. You will have to study this Jesuit. Do you know what was the first thing he did on arriving after his hard night's ride? His horse was bleeding and he sent for a veterinarian. It was but a hired beast; yet he saw to its proper healing. He explained the nature of the wound to the veterinarian and gave orders for the method of treatment. Nor will he fail to see personally that his orders are carried out."

"I have seen these clerical centaurs before. They are more

learned in horseflesh than in their breviaries and are mere cuirassiers under their robes."

"That's hardly true of the Baron Wolff."

"Baron? Are you still talking of Fridag's chaplain?"

"I am. He calls himself Wolff; he is in fact a Herr von Lüdinghausen of a great baronial family of the Empire. I learned that only a few weeks ago. It was Privy-Councilor Stosch who happened to tell me, and I wrote at once to friends in both Vienna and Prague. The answers came the other day. They furnish food for thought."

"Why didn't you tell me that before? And why didn't Stosch come at once to give us an account of this baron? If I pay people, they might render me a small service once in a while."

Poussin flushed.

"You judge Herr Stosch unjustly. I have the honor of knowing him socially; he is not the ordinary venal secretary. He is an eminent philosopher and acts according to the strictest maxims."

"Philosopher or not, he accepted the thousand livres that I sent him. And why should he not, since they all take money in this court, the big fish and the little? Meinders takes, Fuchs takes, Grumbkow takes, General Schöning takes, and Her Serenity the Electoral Princess takes all that she can get. The Crown Prince wants money; he needs a great deal. And His Serenity himself—can he resist the glint of gold? I was scared to death when I had to give him the additional hundred thousand livres, actually hand it to him, even as one gives a tip to a servant! But our most illustrious prince was as gentle as a dove. He passed his hands over the new ducats in the handsome casket and sent his most respectful thanks to His Majesty. We are not in France; these people are

different. Since they all take money, why the devil should a mere secretarial councilor act coy?"

"Herr Stosch took your money, as he said at once, most unwillingly. But since his chiefs in the Council accepted great sums and the other secretaries as much as himself, he could not refuse without seeming arrogant."

"He was quite right. The gold of the King of France does not humiliate the recipient; it is a mark of distinction. Are you satisfied now? But this Wolff! Is he really an Austrian?"

"He's a Livonian but has been long in Vienna. He is said to exert a great influence at court, even upon the Emperor Leopold."

"Was he the Emperor's confessor?"

"He is not the kind of which confessors are made. He prefers to speak loudly rather than softly. He is scarcely the man to apply ghostly bandages to the bellies of suffering souls, like certain court-confessors that we know of."

"M. Poussin, we should treat exalted matters with the proper veneration! But continue."

"You have your little priest here in the house to say mass, and so we thought that the Austrian ambassador has one too. A grave error! My Viennese friend writes me that no one is more expert in the finances of the Empire than this Wolff. He hasn't been here three months and has been twice in Vienna during that period. Even the groom knew that."

"How old do you take him to be?"

"More than forty, but not a great deal more, for he is equal to incredible hardships. He travels twice as fast as anyone else and usually, the better to escape observation, without a servant. Once he was attacked on the road and knocked down his assailant. The man seems to be theologian and statesman and soldier at once. I am told that three years ago

when Vienna was besieged, he commanded a battery against the Turks on an island in the Danube."

Rébenac had risen again and now strode back and forth, not so well satisfied with himself as he had been before.

"You are right, the man himself is more interesting than his rather unimportant trip. But why was he sent here? I have been told that one sometimes sends clever people to assist mediocre ambassadors. But Baron Fridag is the best man in Vienna's diplomatic service. He has been here less than a year and has caused me trouble without end."

"It is for you to penetrate these mysteries. I give you the sober facts. Now proceed with your hypotheses."

"My dear Poussin, that's not very handsome of you! You know me. Had I been a sterling soul like yourself, how far would I have gotten? I wasn't born in the house of a wealthy notary and raised on specially fattened fowl. My family has been hard put to it since the time of the Crusades. Not knowing what else to do for me, they sent me at seventeen into the trenches in front of the besieged city of Douai. But young as I was, I was guided by my good sense and I shall continue to be. Now about this case! I never liked to have anything to do with the Society of Jesus; it's an uncanny crowd. If I mention this Father Wolff in my report, it will at once be known to Father Lachaise, who takes care of the King's conscience. I have told you often, my dear friend, that out of religion one gets nothing but trouble, whatever one does. Consider this matter of Protestantism! I had a passionate controversy with the Elector, who was highly incensed over our treatment of his co-religionists. I reported my good Catholic fight with a certain satisfaction. And Croissy scribbles on the margin of my report, 'Let him not interfere with that!' In other words, because I defended the religious feelings of

His Majesty, I got a reprimand. It would not astonish me if Wolff were in personal correspondence with his brother, Lachaise. One never knows where one is at with these priests. Why all our diplomacy if the Jesuits settle the affairs of state among themselves? They are everywhere—in Vienna, Madrid, Versailles, Rome, Berlin—and everywhere they are the masters.”

After a brief pause Poussin asked whether there were anything for him to do.

“Do take these papers! They are just hurried notes which I made after the review of the troops at Krossen. I will properly incorporate them into my report later. I was told that six thousand men were to be sent to the Emperor. But riding past, it seemed to me that there were at least eight thousand. In spite of which, I doubt whether Ofen will be recaptured from the Turks.”

A footman announced that a runner of Herr von Meinders' had brought the news of that Minister's imminent approach. Since another hour would probably elapse before the gentleman's arrival, Rébenac, Poussin having gone, sat down to begin his report. But he could not help speculating on the purpose of Meinders' coming. For Ministers were rarely in the habit of visiting ambassadors. The sovereign of Brandenburg was far too suspicious to desire such interviews, of which he might not be told; he preferred to order things himself. Nevertheless, he had probably sent the man himself in this instance. When he heard the coach below, Rébenac opened the door of the room and took up his station without. To go so far to meet a Privy-Councilor seemed to him an act of courtesy; to go farther than the head of the stairs would have been a derogation from his own dignity. Now he heard Meinders pant up the narrow stairs. It was one of Rébenac's

most serious annoyances in Berlin that he could not occupy a neat little palace of his own. He had to content himself with hired houses. And it had happened to him that a commodious building had been refused him because the Protestant owner could not endure the thought of having the mass celebrated in his rooms.

Herr Franz von Meinders was a pompous gentleman of fifty with a clean-shaven, bloated face under a huge periwig. He kept his eyes half covered with the lids as with curtains. When unexpectedly from time to time he raised his lids his glance was keen and penetrating. On the step before the last the great Minister Meinders bowed thrice and the ambassador had to go through contortions to bring his head equally near to the floor. The German gentleman had the advantage of a lower physical station, but he was tall and stout. It took some time for the two gentlemen to exhaust the necessary etiquette of the occasion. At last they were seated. Count Rébenac assumed his most delighted expression, although it was clear at once that something disagreeable was in the wind.

The substance of Meinders' discourse was not, in fact, at all pleasing to an ambassador, who was trying daily to create new supports for a shaken and tottering alliance. Did it have to occur to the Marshal La Feuillade, this strange combination of courage and servility, this Roland with a footman's soul, to erect at huge cost an equestrian statue of the King, adorned around its base with images of defeated monarchs, among whom was to figure the Elector of Brandenburg flanked by the Elbe and the Oder represented as mourning female slaves? It goes without saying that the imperial ambassador, Fridag, had been the first in Berlin to know of the matter and had at once carried the news to Herr von Fuchs, who

was gradually assuming the leadership of the Austrian party here. Frederic William was highly incensed. It was, of course, beneath his dignity to complain in his own person. The commission was given to the great Francophile Meinders, the pillar of the French alliance. Annoying as the matter was, Rébenac was at least pleased with the choice of an emissary.

"I am delighted to be able to discuss this quite unimportant matter with Your Excellency. Had Herr von Fuchs come, it would have proven that His Serenity was determined to preserve his irritation. I give you my word that on this very day I will do all of which my pen is capable to rob this complaint of its foundation. You will admit that an ambassador could have more agreeable matters to take up with his sovereign."

"I admit it; but Your Excellency is to consider how harmful an affront of this character might become. The times are difficult; I hardly know whither things are tending."

Meinders opened his veiled eyes wide and gave Rébenac a significant look. The latter, equally serious, sat up a little straighter.

"What you tell me astonishes me. The foundations of your policy are built upon the alliance with us. Why should either of us be annoyed by the follies of courtiers and flatterers? Since, some months ago, your exalted master assured His Majesty in a personal letter that he would enter upon no other alliance without His Majesty's knowledge and approval—since that time I thought that all hesitation was at an end."

"Undoubtedly, and the Elector will keep his promise. Of that I am convinced." He shouldn't have added that last sentence, Rébenac thought of himself; it betrays a doubt. "But you know," Meinders continued, "that the writing of

that letter was no easy matter for the Elector. It was wrung from him under threat of an immediate breach."

"I regretted it extremely. My instructions were precise."

"Doubtless. His Majesty achieved another victory over His Serenity. Not all victories, however, my dear Count, bear the expected fruits. You will permit the expression of this academic wisdom to a statesman, who would be happy to denominate himself your pupil, were he not, alas, by twenty years the senior of your excellency."

"I thank you. You have long known how proud I am rather to consider myself your disciple. I should be most happy, my dear Minister, if I could make it clear to you that one is really somewhat taken aback in Paris. The Elector of Brandenburg, our great ally, makes a treaty of friendship with the Dutch hereditary Stadholder, the worst enemy of the King of France. The Elector of Brandenburg sustains friendly relations with the house of Hapsburg, who are not quite the best friends of the King of France. The Elector of Brandenburg sends auxiliary troops to the Emperor against the Sultan ——"

"Who, you were going to say, is the best friend of the King of France."

"Your Excellency is an epigrammatist of the rank of Martial. But reality does not square wholly with your witty satire. To revert to that letter for a moment: it was the King's opinion that Berlin had to be put to a test. The cure was painful but efficacious."

His voice had grown a trifle sharper. Meinders raised his heavy lids and gave the ambassador a long look before he lowered them again.

"If at this court there is one true adherent of France, I am that one, as much as ever. But you do not make my position

easy. The Elector is an old man and a sick man with not much left to hope for. He conquered Stettin, which he had desired all his life, and yet had to leave it in the possession of the Swedes, because your sovereign willed it so. Very well, he resigned himself to that. What he cannot get over is the fate of his fellow-Protestants in your country."

Rébenac made an impatient gesture, but Meinders continued:

"You must forgive me for mentioning it. But this hostility against the Reformation evokes in His Serenity not only personal bitterness but fear for the fate of his religion."

"I don't quite understand. If I'm not mistaken there are two alliances, and only two, between which the Elector can choose. One is with a Catholic king, the other with a Catholic emperor. The Emperor has been harsh enough toward the Protestants of Hungary. Are you and I, my dear Minister, to converse as though you were a parson of Geneva and I a Capuchin monk? These things are as they are and one must leave them alone. I am myself not without a small Protestant heritage. I am sprung of the blood of the Huguenots and an hundred years ago Henry IV stood beside the body of my great grandfather, who had died for the religion of his king. Later the family, like many others, returned to Catholicism. The Reformation had its great and heroic time; today it is without significance. Or do I deceive myself? But what is left? Sweden, a declining state, bounded by the eternal ice; Holland, a shop built over a swamp; England, a nation of vigorous ale-drinkers with a Catholic king and a corrupt court, both in our hands. Finally and above all, there is one great man, your Elector, the Atlas who still upholds the world of Luther and of Calvin."

"He is old and ill."

"Not so very ill, it seems to me. I admired him only five days ago at Krossen."

"Tell me about that! I was not commanded to attend the review."

"It was magnificent—this train of German princes and ambassadors. But you must have heard all about it. It was a radiant moment, when Their Serenities arrived in an open coach on the field and he mounted his horse. I followed his every movement and was delighted with the agility where-with he reached the saddle. He scarcely needed the help of his Master of the Horse. Once mounted, he turned around and saluted us, and then we followed him, at a smart pace, down the line of the troops, which was half a mile long. My eye is still military enough to permit me to say that, since I left France, I have seen no soldiers of such excellence, especially no such infantry. Tell me, how many men are being sent to Hungary? I estimated the number at nine thousand."

"Not quite. Eight thousand two hundred. General Schöning gave me the number before his departure."

"A considerable part of your army."

"But are we not fighting the hereditary foe of Christendom?" The two gentlemen laughed heartily.

"What surprised me was the absence of the Electoral Crown-Prince from the parade. I trust that he is quite well? It is a long time since I had the privilege of paying my respects to him and his charming consort."

"His Highness is quite well now. But you know how very isolated is the life of the princely court at Köpenick, especially since the death of the little Prince. What a sad blow that was for the young mother!"

"Heavens! a lady of seventeen need scarcely abandon hope."

"But will my master live to see another grandchild? In its very cradle this child had already healed many wounds which these last years had inflicted. Now these wounds open again. My dear Count, all is not well in our high Electoral house."

"I have been told not a little. The Elector himself has graciously told me of his cares. But I had thought that the changes recently made in the Elector's will had removed the fears of the Crown-Prince and reconciled father and son."

Herr von Meinders reflected and then spoke as though unsure of himself.

"Perhaps you know the character of the will better than I do. I know absolutely nothing and desire to know nothing. I am a servitor and have no right to interfere."

"What you tell me astonishes me extremely. Because on the back of the document which contains the new will your name, my dear Minister, has been read."

"Exactly right. My signature is on the reverse. I was not commanded to unfold the document. I bore witness only to its external appearance and to the mere fact of its existence. Of its content I am ignorant."

"Well, then, my honored friend, I am not." Rébenac's tone was dry. "I know the contents. You will easily understand that it is of the utmost importance to us to have an insight into the Elector's testament. It is one of the advantages of Berlin that an ambassador can obtain necessary information, if he have the requisite means. His Serenity did not honor us this time, as he did in the case of his previous will, by appointing His Majesty an administrator. We regret this especially for the sake of the Crown-Prince. The paternal heart of Frederic William desired the stepbrothers of the Crown-Prince to be independent princes and not merely parasites of the future court. Hence he cuts off from his state several new

principalities. Were my sovereign honored with the administration of the will, the Crown-Prince would have a sure advocate in the years to come. For we, my dear Minister, would hardly enjoy seeing the diminution of this strong and fair state in the north of Germany which is our natural ally against the Empire. Your sovereign may have his own reasons for appointing the Emperor Leopold executor of his last will and testament at this moment. But the Emperor—good Heavens! if I were in the Viennese Ministry, I would hardly bewail the partition of Brandenburg! Something like that must once have been the opinion of your Elector, too. Permit me!”

He went to the wall and brought out from a chest a sword with a jeweled sheath. Diamonds glittered on the hilt.

“Do you recognize this handsome piece? You yourself brought it to me more than four years ago from your exalted sovereign. It was at the time when my king, asserting the right of conquest, annexed Strassburg to his realm. If I remember rightly there was a good deal of that sort of patriotic noise in Germany which academic idiots and ignorant scribblers are fond of raising. I recall having read in certain gazettes that I was stoned in the streets of Berlin. It was then that your sovereign sent me this magnificent symbol: stones for the ambassador of France—aye, precious stones. I can still hear you, my dear Herr von Meinders, assuring me at your master’s command that the occupation of Strassburg would in no wise change the friendship between Frederic William and Louis. To me, myself a soldier, he sent this weapon, because we had taken Strassburg by the sword, even as the lands of the Elector, once a scattered mass of heritages, were welded into a state by his sword. Thus the sword of the house of Brandenburg saluted the sword of France and a

serious defeat was inflicted on their common enemy, the house of Austria. You know, my dear Minister, how much France admires and respects you, I do not speak of myself; that signifies little. The King himself holds you in the highest esteem. He has made various attempts to convince you of that."

At this Meinders, still in his chair, bowed twice very deeply. Thereupon, as though no ordinary conversation would now be fitting, he arose. Rébenac did the same. He saw that the interview was at an end and considered it necessary to take a more authoritative tone. Standing, he said:

"I beg you, in the name of our old friendship, to go to His Highness, the Crown-Prince, and to repeat to him what I have just said. He is to know that he has nothing to fear from us, if the will of his father should fail to please him. I confess that according to certain information I am forced to apprehend that His Highness has made advances to Baron Fridag. It may be that he is hard beset by evil advisers; for I am told that Fridag offers money right and left. Not even solid coin; the poor devils sell themselves for promises. The beggarly court of Vienna, as we know, must mortgage an archduchy every time that a thousand real ducats are to be paid. I am trustworthily informed that Field-Marshal Anhalt is in Fridag's pay—that coarse sergeant with his famous non-existent principality. Surely it would be meritorious to counteract such plots. The Crown-Prince is to be assured that my King will never wage a war against him in order that his stepbrothers may become the reigning princes of Minden and of Halberstadt. When he is a sovereign, we shall be glad to see to it that he really rules. It is not so sure that the Emperor would follow the same policy."

"Your Excellency is entirely right. The advantage of the

Electoral house lies wholly on the side of the crown of France; that was and is still my conviction. But it is far from easy for me to talk to the Crown-Prince. I must await a favorable opportunity, else I might awaken sharp suspicions and spoil everything. You have seen very clearly: the Austrian party is eager to entangle him; but I am ignorant of what really passes. It may surprise you, my dear Count, but you see in me one who is no longer admitted to any insight into great affairs. The Elector himself, aided by Herr von Fuchs, carries on the correspondence with foreign powers; I am summoned only for matters concerning the interior. But in the profoundest confidence I may say to you that His Serenity has become distrustful of his son again, and that, for several days past, the Crown-Prince is being closely watched."

"Is that really so? For a week he has not left the castle at Köpenick, nor has Fridag visited him there." An idea occurred to the ambassador. "Do you know Father Wolff?"

"Who is that?"

"Baron Fridag's chaplain."

"An important personality?"

"Perhaps! A Jesuit."

"Truly? He seems not to be much seen in Berlin."

"So you are really going?"

"Privy-Councilor von Grumbkow expects me to dinner."

"Will you give my dear friend Grumbkow my greetings? How could I bear to live here, amid so many hissing snakes, were there not a Meinders and a Grumbkow!"

Thoughtfully Rébenac watched the heavy gentleman depart.

This Meinders—he had been well fed from the French platter these four or five years past! In the secret account-book locked in the desk the sums were put down; the total

must have been nearer to eighty than to seventy thousand livres. It was an open question whether without these handsome tips the Minister would have been able to acquire his four estates, or would have been able to form that exquisite collection of books which he constantly augmented by precious items acquired in Leyden and London? The ambassador asked himself this question not without bitterness, since he himself was once more much embarrassed for a little money. For while he was distributing the gold of France liberally to all the venal people here, his own pay remained penurious. Three days from now, at the *souper* and masquerade given by the Markgrave Ludwig, he would carefully have to avoid going near the gaming-tables, although it really befitted his position to sit at one of them with pocketfuls of ducats and let the German beggars win. But Rébenac was not of a temperament that long harbored painful emotions. A happy thought occurred to him. From a drawer in his desk well hidden within another he took a little book in which he had made notes some years ago concerning the important personages of the court and the government here. Some day, when he was an old gentleman, he would use these notes toward the composition of his memoirs:

Among the Elector's Privy-Councilors the most important is Herr von Meinders. He is the most skillful as well as the most serious statesman not only of his particular country, but probably of all Germany. It is his undeviating principle to be whole-heartedly loyal to the interests of his master. But he desires this course of action to lead him at the same time to opulence and wealth. Hence he loves all those solid rewards and all those marks of favor that contribute to his well-being. Whatever the King causes to be paid him is well applied, but one must expect nothing of him that runs counter to his conscience and to his conception of his duty. Luckily, he is honestly convinced that the only true interest of his master lies in a perfect alliance with the King. But he wishes this to be effected with the dignity that shall preserve the confidence of the other princes of the Empire who look upon the

Elector of Brandenburg as their chief. Such is the great aim of Herr von Meinders. I have in reality never been able to bribe him, since he does with all his heart desire the permanent alliance with France.

I seem to have delineated a perfect Cincinnatus, Rébenac said to himself. Yet, closely thought upon, could I write otherwise today? A new chapter should be added to the treatise of Machiavelli: Concerning the characters of Statesmen in the Pay of Foreign Powers. Among these there are rogues who accept the money despite their own opinion; but there are men of honor who take it with conviction. Fuchs is a scoundrel; he has received scarcely less than Meinders and now leaves me in the lurch. Meinders remains honest; that is the difference. He lets himself be well paid for his honesty. But who shall blame him? The French nobleman is the only one in the world who consents to live and to die a beggar in the service of his king.

Noon tolled from the Nicolai church. Rébenac rang and bade the footman send him up a plate of soup. M. Poussin, the page, Baron Lamotte, and his reverence were to be pleased to dine alone. He himself began eagerly the writing of his report.

★(3)★

DR. THOMASIVS had now been in Berlin for nearly a week without having at all promoted the purpose of his journey hither. This purpose was to obtain an academic appointment in the Electoral state of Brandenburg. The hostility of Professor Carpzov and of the orthodox party gave him little hope of advancement in Leipzig. Thomasius had long been carrying on a learned correspondence with several prominent men in Berlin, especially with the Secretary Stosch. These friends received him amiably, but they could do little for him. In his sanguine way he had imagined that he would be able to see the old lion of the land in person. More important people than himself, however, failed to obtain an audience with Frederic William. At the review of the troops at Krossen the Elector had overexerted himself again and was more ill than before. His viscera were affected and the gout had driven him nearly mad since the end of the winter. A thing that used to happen in war-time only was now a common occurrence, namely, that he saw not even his chief councilors during an entire day. The most pressing documents were sent for signature to his bedside. Neither could the Leipziger professor obtain an introduction to the extremely influential Minister von Fuchs. Sadly he was planning his return when his friend Stosch, an adherent of the new system of natural right pro-

posed by himself and Puffendorf, gave him the following advice. He was to go to Köpenick to be introduced to the heir apparent, whose star, seeing that his father could scarcely live another year, must necessarily be in the ascendant. Stosch had a younger colleague who lived in his house and was, like himself, in the service of the Privy-Council. For some time it had been the duty of this Herr Altorf to communicate to the Prince's former tutor, the Councilor von Danckelmann, or to His Highness himself, the current governmental acts, seeing that on account of the well-known differences in the ruling family, the Crown-Prince resided exclusively at Köpenick. Stosch invited Herr Thomasius to visit him late in the afternoon. Herr Altorf, who had arrived only yesterday, was leaving for Köpenick again on the following morning and would take Thomasius along, if permission to introduce him to the Crown-Prince could be obtained.

As on the previous days, Thomasius passed the hours after the noonday meal in the castle, in the Electoral library which had become extensive enough to begin to possess a European reputation. He then went to his lodgings at the Sign of the Golden Doe in the Klosterstrasse in order to dress for the evening. In a black coat of fine quality and modish cut, black silk stockings, and a black hat with a silver rim, his long lace cuffs hanging over his hands and his slender rapier at his side, he strolled, well-satisfied with himself, across the castle square to the Brüderstrasse, on the left side of which Herr Stosch inhabited the antique gabled house with a small garden left him by his father. The latter had been an eminent preacher. The son, Frederic William Stosch, had inherited the quiet, thoughtful ways and love of study of his father, but not his father's faith. He was a man of forty and happily married. The friends in that small Berlin circle, who were

interested in investigating the operations of the reason, were much pleased that the quiet, delicate man whose youth had been joyless had found so excellent a wife. When Thomasius entered Stosch's library he found two gentlemen in his host's company.

"Messieurs, this is M. Thomasius of Leipzig, of whose great merits we have been speaking. Monsieur, this is M. Poussin of Paris, who, like yourself, unites the qualities of a jurist and of an excellent philosopher. And this is my very dear friend, M. Altorf, of whom I told you. Messieurs, will it please you to be seated?"

For a moment Thomasius regarded Altorf, whose beautifully modeled dark face surprised him. Then he gave his attention to the Frenchman. He had no great love for that nation, but he admired it and read many French books. M. Poussin continued the reading of a long letter which he had received from Paris. In that city everyone was talking of a book that had just appeared. The entire edition had been exhausted at once. The printer had no copies left, and since people could not bear to await the new edition, copies were borrowed for half a day and important passages copied by hand. The book was called *The Characters, or The Manners of this Century*, and had been written by a certain La Bruyère who was said to earn his bread as a private tutor. Poussin read passages from this book concerning the court, the great, the heart of man, and finally the following extremely bitter sentences.

"There are to be observed certain wild animals, both male and female, which occur in the open country, blackish beasts, well burned by the sun. They cling to the earth in which they wallow and which they dig up continuously with an unconquerable stubbornness. They have a kind of human voice, and when they stand erect on their feet one may even observe human countenances. As a matter of fact, they are human.

By night they creep into their caverns; they are nourished on black bread and water and roots. They relieve the rest of mankind of the trouble of ploughing and sowing and harvesting; in return they are permitted to appease their hunger with the bread which they have sown."

When Poussin stopped reading and looked about him, Altorf, the youngest present, spoke in a lively fashion.

"What an astonishing book that must be! A man who has the courage thus to delineate the peasants, the real nation, under the very eyes of the King and the nobility—what a man that must be! The common people look not otherwise here."

"It amazes me," Thomasius observed, "that they permit a book like that to be printed in Paris. If the common people hear that, it might easily make them rebellious. A week ago I heard one speaking in a barn, who also incited the peasantry; he is called Knutsen."

"Where did you meet him?" cried Altorf.

"Do you remember his name, too? Many years ago, when you and I were very young, the fellow created much mischief at Jena with his crass atheism. I met him on my journey hither. At a fair in Brietzen the chatterer poured out his uninstructed nonsense to carters and serfs. An insolent atheist after the fashion of the Jew Spinoza."

The others looked at each other in some embarrassment and Thomasius observed that he had struck a false note. Had Herr Stosch not been so reserved, he would long ago have betrayed his close acquaintance with the ill-famed thinker of Amsterdam. One usually avoided this subject, because respectable people detested this imposter and diabolical Jew. Stosch himself was at work on a Latin treatise concerning faith and reason, which was quite Spinosistic in character. Since the host was silent, it was Poussin who, in slow but careful German, spoke soothingly concerning the reviled phi-

losopher. Thomasius, however, was not one to be easily put out of countenance, and said unconcernedly:

"I merely expressed the opinion of many good judges. I have not yet myself read his books. But it is my opinion that we, who are the friends of a sane independence of the mind, are in the greatest danger when we are confused with the deniers of God. In my last book, for instance, I proved that polygamy may well be supported according to the laws of nature. I would not dream of disputing that, according to revelation, it is a sin. Where God has spoken clearly the reason is not to meddle. Where revealed truth is lacking, reason and nature are to speak."

"But suppose God created the human reason in order to reveal himself most clearly through it?"

"My answer to that, Herr Stosch, is that of a jurist: the written law always takes precedence over that which may be inferred or assumed. In a court of law a single document outweighs an hundred handsome theories. We evangelical Christians, messieurs, can criticize anything not definitely laid down in the Scriptures; we have no Pope nor do we revere mere theological opinion. But once we begin to attack the Bible itself, all things crumble, for all order is built on this foundation. An atheist may be in his own person gentle and a man of peace, yet is his atheism a ravenous beast that devours the world."

The others did not enter into the spirit of the assured observations of the Leipziger liberal. He therefore continued speaking, never a difficult thing for him, in order to give a very humorous account of his own rebellion against the scholastic philosophy and its moldy archfather, Aristotle. It was his favorite plan to edit a German periodical for the learned world, like the Parisian *Journal des Savants*, in order to make

it hot for the pedants. In his leisure hours he had already composed not a few pasquinades for this projected journal and had even brought some of these to Berlin with him.

A maidservant, sent in by Madame Stosch, offered cake and Hungarian wine. After the refreshment Poussin, who had said little and listened attentively, withdrew. Thomasius remained to discuss with Altorf the trip to Köpenick, which was to be made by water. He was advised to take new books with him, if he had any such in his box. The Crown-Princess was always avid of information; he had better, too, take along the satires for his future journal, Herr Altorf advised. The latter seemed to Thomasius to speak with a slight Dutch accent. This was in no way surprising, seeing that every second person in the higher society of Berlin seemed to be of Dutch or French origin.

At seven in the morning he arrived promptly with his luggage at the bridge by the Stralau gate. Altorf was already there with two rowers and the boat. The weather was beautiful. Here the river emerged from the walls and one passed the beautiful gardens of the estates of distinguished people. It was out here that Meinders had his country seat; next to it was the Belvedere of Herr Raulé, the director of the Electoral navy. The Spree was swollen; hence they rode close to the right bank where Thomasius observed a dam crowned with willows border upon a heap of low cots. That was the fishing-village of Stralau. A little farther on one came to the great forests of the domain of Köpenick. So far there had been little conversation. Thomasius had been drowsy. Now he aroused himself.

"Am I right in assuming, monsieur, that you are Dutch?"

"No; I am German on my father's side. Do you find my intonation definitely Dutch? Yet I was eight years old when I

first came to the Netherlands and knew no word of the language."

"But it became your second mother-tongue?"

"Rather my third. The sounds I heard in my cradle were Polish. There lives in Berlin an exquisite connoisseur of languages; I spoke to him once only and he immediately heard a Polish echo in certain words. It is Baron Wolff, a much-traveled Jesuit."

"Is he a tall, broad-shouldered man, no longer young, but hale and red-faced as a colonel?"

"You seem to know him."

"I had no idea he was a Jesuit. He was my traveling companion in the stage-coach which broke down at Brietzen; he continued his journey on horseback."

"Then he was in Leipzig?"

"No; he entered the coach at Wittenberg, having arrived from Dessau."

"From Dessau? Not possible!"

"I see you are astonished. Why?"

"I am very glad that you did not mention the matter yesterday. Herr Poussin, who was present, though a most honorable and learned gentleman, is in the service of the French ambassador. If you will heed me, Doctor, you will not mention this circumstance concerning Father Wolff either in the place to which we are going or to anyone in Berlin."

"Is he a very dangerous character? You provoke my curiosity concerning him."

"Please don't think me an impertinent fool. But let me impress this on you: you are going today to a court which is but a fragment of a much greater court, in which all corners are full of politics. This Father Baron Wolff is the domestic chaplain of the Austrian ambassador; but prayer is hardly

his chief business. There are many parties here, Herr Thomasius, and much intrigue. Wolff's journey was evidently a very secret matter. We ourselves knew nothing of it and you may be very sure that he did not visit Dessau in order to see the town shopkeeper or apothecary. He probably went to visit the Prince of Anhalt, who usually lives there. You know, without doubt, that the Field-Marshal Anhalt is a brother-in-law of the Elector and is very close to his nephew, the Crown-Prince. I am not at liberty to make inferences from these facts. I beg you to let this suffice."

Altorf had been bending far forward in order that the boatmen might not hear. Now he leaned back and took some documents out of his portmanteau. He offered the apology that he had to go through these documents for the Crown-Prince. Thomasius, never afflicted with excessive delicacy, regarded the pages in the other's hand and observed a language unknown to him. He asked whether it was Polish.

"It is, and corrected by the Elector's own hand."

"Your sovereign is very many-sided!"

"He understands many languages and desires his officials to do the same. That was, luckily, the single merit that introduced me to his service."

"You seem to me to be very enviable."

"I am merely a secretary."

"I am an academic teacher and write Latin controversies with other pedants. You serve a great Prince and may rise in the state."

"Let us begin that sentence over again: you are an academic teacher; your father was a famous professor before you; you have never known anything but security and order. When I was one year old my parents were driven from Cracow. They were of the Socinian faith. We fled to Hungary. They drove

us thence when I was five. We came to Mannheim and were suffered to live there for three years. Then the heretics had to wander on and so came to Holland."

"And are your parents at peace now?"

"At peace! The Poles killed my father when I was three months old. My mother died in Hungary. All through my childhood I wandered about with my grandfather. Perhaps you have heard the name of Andreas Wiszowaty—the last fighter of his faith which the Jesuits wiped out."

Thomasius was taken aback. The embittered earnestness of the other made him feel subdued. For the sake of politeness he immediately took out a book. But his eyes wandered from the page to the landscape. He beheld low river-banks, islands half-flooded by the water and pine-forests in the sun. Few habitations were to be seen and hence a man of taste could hardly regard these banks as pleasing. Yet when he observed the meadows and the broad girdle of reeds which the boat touched, there arose to him from the scene a certain monotonous charm. He pondered how one could express that charm in elegiac verses and the image came to him of an Arcadian valley through which flowed a Scythian stream. At last they left the Spree and turned into its tributary, the Dahme, and passed under a long narrow bridge. Now they came within sight of the castle on its island in a garden of tall trees. Altorf suddenly looked up from his papers.

"You were speaking of Matthias Knutsen yesterday. What does he do now?"

"He wanders from fair to fair in a wagon and stirs the people to rebellion. A mad heretic who will yet be hanged."

"Yet there is no better heart in all the world. To be sure, he is no distinguished philosopher who writes Latin; but the oppressed of earth have a defender in him. For that reason

he will probably be hanged, quite as you said. I used to know him."

Thomasius had no time to express his astonishment. At this moment they passed the front of the princely castle. He saw a bright and dignified building of two stories with tall windows and a slanting roof. On the lawn that ran to the river stood low bushes. Circling the extreme point of the narrow island, they landed on its other side, which was separated from the land by a very narrow inlet of water. Scarcely had they walked a few yards when from behind a wide-spreading bush there sprang forth a tall man, brandishing his naked sword with a mock heroic gesture and crying out to Altorf:

"Dark knight, follow me or you are a dead man!"

Both were astonished. But before Altorf could make a laughing reply he heard Thomasius exclaim:

"Johann Besser!"

"Christian Thomasius!"

"As God lives, thou hast grown round and noble, old colleague!"

"'Tis the effect of my high offices, Christian. When I was a poor tutor in Leipzig I was thin enough. How fares that city on the celebrated Pleisse River?"

"She weeps for thee, having seen no ruffian like thee since. But where is the charming Mistress Kühlewein?"

"Not far from here, in the little house yonder in attendance upon Her Highness the Princess Marie Amalia, to whose feet I am about to lead you gentlemen."

"You must ask Her Highness most graciously to excuse me," said Altorf; "the Crown-Prince expects me immediately."

"Ah, my young Cato! What an important personage you are! But today the service of ladies must precede that of lords. Already has the beautiful Erdmute asked after you. Moreover,

I can swear that His Highness, accompanied by two young lords, has gone to the forest to see to the wood-felling." As they walked on together he turned once more to his old Leipzig friend. "I forgot to ask how fares our Mistress Heyland?"

"My wife and children thrive. But so does our old enemy, Carpzov."

"The devil take him," said emphatically the Councilor of the Legation Besser. "Does that toad still live and squawk? However, gentlemen, we have before us lovelier objects to contemplate."

Not far from the shore a small summer-house stood in the grass, and from its half-open door floated to them the laughter and the voices of women. Flourishing a little flag of blue silk in their direction, a tall lady appeared on the threshold of the summer-house. This was Besser's wife, Catherine, *née* von Kühlewein, the blue-eyed Anemone celebrated in his poems. Behind her became visible another and very youthful figure in a frock of the softest blue. Respectfully Madame Besser stepped aside and Besser himself sank upon one knee, beckoning his companions to do the same.

"You will permit me, most serene Mistress of the House of Dying-Blue, to introduce to your gracious presence not only the well-known Knight of Darkness, but another who has just arrived in your realms—the long-familiar, wise, and learned Master Thomasius of Lipsia."

Bowing with a friendly bashfulness, Marie Amalia offered her hand to be kissed by the two new arrivals.

The sixteen-year-old princess had asked her brother to give her the simple summer-house behind his castle to be the scene of her poetic fancies. Frederic, who was not at all fond of his four stepbrothers, entertained a genuinely fraternal affec-

tion for this young daughter of his stepmother. His wife, Sophie Charlotte, who was not overfond of the Berlin family, had also found a little place in her heart for her pretty little sister-in-law. The Crown-Prince had invited Marie Amalia to spend the last year of her girlhood with him at Köpenick. For already, not asking after her will, her father, the Elector, had betrothed her to one of the Mecklenburg dukes. Having escaped the depressing atmosphere of the Berlin castle, it pleased this romantic young lady to establish in the park of Köpenick a realm dedicated to that noble and musical melancholy which the immortal romancer Philip von Zesen had made popular. Though the strong-minded people of the day might declare Zesen and all his pale-rose and pale-blue world of melancholy ladies and gentlemen utterly old-fashioned and trite, yet Marie Amalia kept the *Adriatic Rosamond* ever upon her table and because Rosamond, seized by the invincible woes of love, had built her a hut by a river's brink, therefore beside the flowing Spree and Dahme arose a refuge for the sweetness of poetic grief. Besser, who was a born master of ceremonies, no sooner heard of this plan than he set passionately about its execution. The first thing to procure was a great quantity of blue cloth, since *bleu mourant*—translated by Zesen into the even more melancholy German *Sterbeblau*—had become once and for all the symbolical color of faithful and unhappy love. In Zesen's romance the walls of Rosamond's hut had been covered with dying-blue tapestries, the floor covered with lovely blue tiles, the ceiling tinted and the tables draped in the same hue. Besser could not produce an exact imitation of all this at Köpenick, yet he had draped the wooden walls with a pleasing blue and had garlanded the two windows that gave upon the bight with curtains of blue Chinese cloth found in the chests of the Crown-Princess.

Because the vocabulary of Zesen was to be used, these windows were at first called candles of the day and the mirror was called a looking-glass, and when Sophie Charlotte, who usually ran over without ceremony, failed to appear a whole forenoon because she was pouting at her husband again and had tears in her eyes—then it was whispered with significant glances that the most lovely Empress Amoene was unfortunately grief-stricken. They were all given names, such as Clorinda, Margaris, Strephon, and Florindo. But this method of speaking soon disappeared. Besser killed it with his caustic wit. And on the very first day one had sent back to their sheepfold the two white lambs which Besser and Christoph Dohna had teased and tormented. Upon the whole the company in the house of Dying-Blue was found to be too gay to fall into the mood of its favorite romancer. They always started well enough with playing the lute and with tender songs. But soon laughter began to be heard and even the Princess failed to cherish her melancholy. Besser's assistant in all these jests was a handsome alert youth with roving eyes, a certain Count Christoph von Dohna from Kopet in Switzerland, a half-Frenchman of a great Protestant house that laid claim to distant kinship with the dynasties of Brandenburg and Nassau-Orange. The favor of the court had made Dohna a major at twenty. His regiment was even now on the way to Hungary. Each day he should have left to join his troops. He had the intention of going, too, but still stayed on, consoling himself with the reflection that since the Turks had been comfortable in Budapest these hundred and forty-five years, they would scarcely show their heels at the first sight of the Brandenburgers. Hardly older than Dohna and even more immature was a young gentleman who, in honor of the place and its mistress, wore a long sky-blue coat with gold-slashed sleeves.

A diminutive wig, such as is seemly for travelers, covered the boyish head. This gentleman was a reigning prince and sovereign of an authentic little splinter of the Holy Roman Empire. He was the Duke Morris William of Sachsen-Weitz, a cousin of Marie Amalia, who payed constant court to her, though in a melancholy fashion, on account of her betrothal. Each of these two high personages had a companion; the Duke a chamberlain from Weitz who knew not what to make of these fancies and stood leaning, dumb as a column, against the wall of the summer-house; the Princess of Brandenburg, for her part, a lovely blond lady, her friend and lady in waiting, Erdmute von Bellin. All day long and except at meal-times this little group was faithful to its Dying-Blue isolation. But Sophie Charlotte, whose rooms were not a hundred steps away, would come over on visits, accompanied by several cheerful ladies. Whenever Altorf was in Köpenick and was not working with the Crown-Prince, he, too, was a guest in the summer-house. One was not without a suspicion of the magnet which drew into these blue fancies the serious and reserved young secretary. It was surprising that this whole sentimental game, although it had now been lasting for nearly two weeks, had not yet wearied its participants. It had been most charming during long rainy days. They had sat in the summer-house singing, reading aloud, casting sentimental glances at one another, composing madrigals. The poet Besser had told his mad stories. He had reënacted that scene of a year ago when he had been Electoral envoy in London. During an audience in the throne-room the Venetian ambassador had sought to slip past him to reach the king first. He had grabbed the Italian by the breeches and hurled him back into the room. His Majesty and all their lordships had laughed aloud.

Thomasius quickly felt himself at home between these blue walls. One had erected here a chapel to the fame of a writer and none knew better than he how to discourse on literary matters. Though he was a scholar, he felt no embarrassment in the society of ladies. He became at once the center of all these handsome young people. Besser had been master of ceremonies so long that he did not object to yielding his station to one who would soon leave and could not play the rival. With some hesitation the Princess showed her new guest her most treasured possession—the library housed between carved wooden columns against the wall. Except for this there was nothing on the blue carpet of the summer-house save a little table and a few chairs, and next to the window a chaise-longue upholstered in blue velvet. She begged him to read something to the company, provided her books were not beneath his tastes. There stood the great French romances of Madeleine de Scudéry—*Artamène, Ibrahim, the illustrious Pasha, Clélie*. There was also the *Princesse de Clèves* of the Countess Lafayette. Nor were the latest German romances lacking. Chief in grandeur among these was the recently published first volume of *Octavia* by the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, a little *opus* of hardly eleven hundred pages. But Thomasius was especially delighted to see the writings of the Swan of Zittau, Christian Weise. Nor had they ever seemed so charming to him as in this binding of blue leather stamped with the golden initials of the Princess. Besser, however, wanted to insist on putting the old-fashioned *Rosamond* of Zesen into his hands.

“Do read us a few pages. One can never hear Zesen too much. It was he who first gave our rough and vulgar German speech his nobler and purer impress. And what a deep knowledge he has of the delicate souls of the fair sex! We read him

by day and by night." Besser said all that with a hypocritical enthusiasm in order to provoke a discussion. Hotly Thomasius swallowed the bait.

"On the contrary, my dear Johan, this Zesen knows nothing about women. He derived all his knowledge of the sex from a maidservant in Leipzig who was his great love and furnished him the model of all his heroines. As for language —'twas my countryman, Weise, who first gave it elegance and polish. 'Tis he who has captured all the delicacy of the French to make the young people of Germany less boorish."

He took one of the little volumes, turned the pages, and, still standing, read with a pedagogical finger raised:

"Ah, draw not the charms of thy body away,
For how can I love if thou flee?
Yet be careful, my angel, that under the sway
Of passion I injure not thee."

He turned to Marie Amalia. "You can feel the spring and grace of his archness! And here are his 'Tears of Virginity.' You will observe, most serene Princess, the graceful though somewhat free style:

"Empty bowl, farewell to thee,
Candle all unlit so late!
Solid lock that lacketh key,
Balanced scale that shows no weight!
Happy, happy is that she
Who betimes can mated be!"

But he stopped, for he observed a twitching on the face of the Princess. How was he to know that at the thought of a certain Karl von Mecklenburg-Güstrow the charms of love did not seem as desirable to the Princess as they did to the lusty maiden of Herr Weise's poem. Nevertheless, she thanked

him and, suppressing a soft sigh that almost no one heard, she said:

"I will sing a little song by our friend Besser. Will you play the lute, Mutchen?"

Her soprano was agreeable but not strong.

"I cannot see Melinda's glance,
I only hear her gentle weeping;
How changed that heavenly countenance
Whence sunny looks but now were leaping!
Who can be happy when the fair
Laments her lot in tones despairing?
Her happiness she need not share,
Half of her woe I'm bent on bearing!"

The lute fell silent. The Princess turned and reposed her head against the bosom of Madame von Bellin. The company beheld her with a slightly embarrassed sympathy. Thomasius, looking at the faces about him, observed under Altorf's black lashes a fleeting smile that sought Erdmute Bellin. For but a second the two looked at each other. Then their eyes turned elsewhere. Marie Amalia raised her head again and turned toward the company. At once Dohna, in order to obliterate the little incident, took up another instrument and assumed the posture of a jester. But Besser would not let him sing.

"Keep still, Peter! We can't bear with that! Your voice is as falsetto as a capon's and your lute-playing is bad to boot!"

Christoph's Dying-Blue name was supposed to be Florindo. But the Crown-Prince, who liked the little Count and cuffed and caressed him alternately like a lapdog, always called him Peter. Everyone in the castle followed that example. Dohna was about to reply to Besser's insult. But at that moment he heard voices without. He hastened to the door and turned:

"Altesse! *On vient!* The Emperor Altamir! The Empress Amoene! They're here!"

Marie Amalia had scarcely time to issue from her door with her whole court behind her. The other company was still thirty paces away, but a hand was already beckoning and a young voice calling, "*Bonjour, Mimette!*" The Crown-Princess Sophie Charlotte was singularly devoid of a sense of etiquette. The lack grieved her husband deeply, his whole heart being set on the ceremonial of the court. With measured steps, his young wife beside him, attired in a cinnamon-colored gold-embroidered coat, the little gentleman moved across the sunny sward. Close behind him appeared his Moorish body-servant, a colossal negro in a billowing garment of silk and a yellow turban, carrying pistols and two terrible crooked daggers in his belt. Then followed the ladies and lords of the two exalted personages. Completing the train there marched in broad formation six huge, booted red-coated soldiers of the body-guard with great plumed hats. The Princess Marie Amalia made an excessively low curtsy before the exalted couple; the Crown-Prince, taking off his plumed hat, returned his little sister's greeting with an unbelievably solemn bow. Now his coiffure was uncovered. In all the Empire there was not to be found the like of his ceremonial periwig. It was one of those mighty and majestic periwigs such as M. Binette of Paris built for the French king. The curled blond locks hung down on either side far to the chest; behind, the locks were parted halfway down and then descended deep over the back in cascading waves. And yet this hirsute wonder of the world could not conceal the fact that it was meant to hide. The Crown-Prince Frederic was hunch-backed.

At a gesture from Besser the soldiers of the body-guard had already brought four chairs from the summer-house. The Crown-Princess sat down first; next, very properly, the Duke Morris William, seeing there was no one above him in rank

save the Emperor himself; then Marie Amalia, and last the Crown-Prince. Everyone could observe the signs of rage on the latter's face—a rage caused this time neither by ugly news from the castle in Berlin nor by his charming black-haired, blue-eyed wife. Frederic had suddenly entered his study during the night and had caught a lackey about to steal documents from the desk. After a severe caning the fellow had admitted that he was in the pay of a serving-man of Count Rébenac. What was one to do? One could have this fellow whipped thrice; one could not have the French ambassador whipped.

It went without saying that etiquette demanded the first remark to be addressed to the Duke of Zeitz.

"I trust that your lordship is finding some amusement in my park."

"I am obliged to you, exalted cousin, and to your gracious consort, for your overwhelming courtesy."

Frederic turned next to Marie Amalia.

"I trust that my sister has recovered from yesterday's headache."

"I thank you for your graciously fraternal question. It is much improved."

The Crown-Prince beheld Thomasius and beckoned Besser to approach. During this unguarded moment the Crown-Princess with lightning speed poked out the little red end of her tongue toward her sister-in-law. But immediately she reassumed a pose so statuesque that her coal-black locks on either side of her pale face did not stir.

"Monsieur Besser, has a stranger arrived?"

"It is Herr Thomasius of Leipzig, a famous professor at the university there who implores the grace of being permitted to pay his reverence to Your Highness."

The Crown-Prince was very condescending to Thomasius. He invited him to dine and commanded the majordomo who stood beside his chair to assign the stranger a room in the castle.

Next Altorf was summoned.

"I am happy to see thee. We must work after dinner."

Everyone observed the kindness of the Crown-Prince for his young secretary. Altorf was evidently in high favor.

Not far from the chair of His Highness two gentlemen could be observed. One was of middle age and garbed in black, a dignified man, straight and proud and of authoritative bearing. The other, a young cavalry captain of the Electoral army, was incredibly tall and slender and had a foreign air. He was, in truth, a Scotchman, a banished lord of that party which was seeking to undermine the power of the Catholic King James II and to set the hereditary stadtholder of Holland on the British throne. He was living in Berlin as the secret agent of William of Orange; the Elector had thrust him into a cavalry-man's uniform in order to make him less obtrusive.

The gentleman in black approached the chair of the Crown-Prince.

"Is the letter ready which Your Highness as a matter of politeness must write to the Prince of Orange?"

While the Prince had permitted the others to address him without himself stirring, he turned half around toward this gentleman and spoke softly.

"I had to sign the letters to the government of Kleve today."

"There is no hurry about them. I asked Lord Leven to come here that you might give him the letter personally. He leaves for Holland tonight."

"But I am stadtholder of Kleve, you know," said Frederic, flushing.

"The letters to Kleve can go by the ordinary post; that to the Prince of Orange cannot. You must remind him of your existence; Berlin sees to it that he does not forget your brother Philip. I have composed the letter, but you must copy it in your own hand; you owe that to William. Will Your Highness be pleased to consider that Lord Leven rides back to Berlin at three!"

If only Herr von Danckelmann hadn't always been so dictatorial! All that he said was perfectly correct; only he should have been more diplomatic, especially in the presence of others. He was no longer the Prince's tutor.

Frederic beckoned Dohna to approach.

"Peter, thou young rogue, when art thou joining thy regiment? I will tell my father how thou wagest war."

Dohna threw himself on both knees, lowered his face, and kissed Frederic's hand. He was graciously pulled by the ear and given a blow in jest. Happily the little Count jumped up and looked into his master's eyes with the adoring cheerfulness of a faithful little favorite.

The company arose in order to promenade under the great avenue of trees before returning to the castle for the midday meal.

"I am astonished, Herr Altorf, to see you back so soon. What are those documents that you have brought?"

"I thought you were aware of the fact that His Highness had commanded me to bring the treaties concerning the Silesian inheritance."

"I am bound to confess to you that I did not know. I have been half out of favor during the last three days. Perhaps you may aspire to my position."

"Why should you say that to me? I never sought these trips to Köpenick. It was you who proposed me to the Prince."

"Nor do I regret it. Forget what I just said. Our young master begins to make me furious. What has he to do with the Silesian treaties? I have explained the matter to him at least ten times. Is there anything new in the city?"

"Ilgen and Friedeborn are constantly summoned from the chancellery to confer with Herr von Fuchs. They evidently have strict orders to say nothing."

"This uncertainty is terrible. Will Fridag never show his hand? Is the compact never to be signed?"

"Everything is quite as it was the last time I reported. The pact is ready; the Elector asks urgently every day. But the Austrians drag the matter on and assert that instructions for the final signatures have not arrived from Vienna."

"What does this mean? Month in and month out the imperial court insisted upon the treaty; all possible influences have been brought to bear upon it. Are they going to draw back now? It would be the greatest disappointment of my life. Has Vienna gone quite mad? If the Elector is not caught now when Louis sends his bloodhounds after the Protestants, then all is lost and Europe will become a mere French province. The Prince of Orange alone cannot fight for us all! If all hope dies here I shall join him. What do you make of Fuchs?"

"Nothing! It is said that Rébenac is soon to have an audience in the castle."

"But, almighty God! one cannot recall the troops that have set out for Hungary! Or else ——?"

"That is scarcely possible. But General Schöning ——"

"He can go to the devil! A fine fellow, that! Rébenac's best friend; he probably knows why. Altorf, I urge upon you the

greatest watchfulness. Your office is not high, but you can see a great deal. Understand me well: Great changes are ahead and the aspect of the world will become much better or else much more terrible. You are under some small obligation to me. I procured you your position; I recommended you to the chancellery. Be loyal to me! More than ever is the Prince of Orange our only hope. Germany lies bound in fetters; the Frenchman has one foot on England's neck! If that monster is victorious, what is there left to live for? You are the son and the grandson of men who suffered for their faith. If your heart nourishes no hatred of the Jesuits, whose will?"

They had to hasten in order to catch up with the princely couple who had reached the castle door. The meeting of Thomasius with Father Wolff on his way from Dessau occurred to Altorf. But before he could speak of it Danckelmann had escaped him. How violent he had been! If he were to discover the secret plotting of Anhalt now, he would be capable of questioning the Crown-Prince on the instant. A very disagreeable situation might arise. It were better to mention this ticklish matter at a more fitting time.

The castle at Köpenick contained some very noble apartments. Usually, however, the meals were taken in a less ceremonious place and manner. The table for the four exalted personages who wished to be among themselves was spread in a large high room of the basement which had an extensive river view. There was a balcony from which one could go straight to the river's bank, as the Crown-Prince liked to do. The table of fourteen or sixteen covers for the others was spread in an adjoining and rather dark room in which one was a little crowded. Here the mural paintings were not complete and an odor of paint hung in the air; the renovations were constantly begun and interrupted by the Crown-Prince, according to the

state of his purse. In spite of these odors the company seemed to be merry enough, and it was not without envy that Sophie Charlotte heard the occasional laughter of the ladies or the voices of Besser and Thomasius. Had Herr von Danckelmann been at that board, the company would have been more subdued. Luckily, he had taken the tall Lord Leven to withdraw to his rooms in order to dine with his dear Madame von Danckelmann, the very aspect of whom could throw Sophie Charlotte into a nervous fit. At the princely table the mood, if not quite black, was less than sprightly. In fact, His Highness would need to have a particularly good day for people to be quite natural in his presence. What could Sophie Charlotte have been thinking of? What went on in the mind of this lovely creature who, though so young, had never been a child? What was the meaning in those large blue eyes over which the brows were curved as gracefully as two dark crescents? She had been educated to the profession of graceful boredom. Despite her youth, she was mistress of it. When nothing occurred to her she sought by the dignity and deliberateness of her demeanor to enhance that reputation for philosophical accomplishment which was the proper aim of a pupil of the great Leibniz. And what else had she to live for? The passion of love had little to give her. It was not out of love that she had married the homely and morose Frederic von Brandenburg; it was for the sake of his high rank and because the marriage suited her father. Aside from the advancement of the interests of her Hanoverian family, politics held no attraction for her. But to know that the wisest and most learned men of Europe, M. Bayle, M. Leibniz, M. Locke, and even Bishop Bossuet spoke of her; to write and to receive letters concerning the profoundest subjects; to read in actual print in the *Mercure Gallant*: *La Princesse de*

Brandebourg, cette vraie et grande philosophe—that was an aim to live for! In spite of which Sophie Charlotte listened with the most respectful attention to her husband, who was explaining precisely and at great length to the young Morris William von Zeitz the rules and insignia of the English Order of the Garter, to possess which was one of Frederic's chief desires. The Crown-Princess made her observations. Just now she had again caught in her husband's eyes one of those somber and avid looks that she had often seen in the past few days. *Allons—allons!* She would have to be on her guard!

After the meal Their Highnesses held brief court in the Chinese room. Thereupon Frederic bowed deeply to his wife, gave Altorf a sign, and withdrew. At once they all felt more light-hearted, and Sophie Charlotte merrily threw her arms about her blond sister-in-law, who was a good bit taller than the dainty second lady of the land. "*Petite sœur Mimette, il fait beau, nous irons chez vous!*" The majordomo was requested to have coffee served in the blue pavilion. Thither the company set out at once, except the Crown-Princess's gentlemen who had to hold themselves in readiness to be summoned. Sophie Charlotte considered them leathery, anyhow. Including her ladies in waiting there would be a dozen people in the pavilion, and so the hermitage would not be empty. It would be an afternoon of wit; so much was certain. First Sophie Charlotte conversed with the Margravine and with the Duke of Zeitz, who was sitting at her other side, while the rest of the gentlemen were standing in a row next the door. Then she took a book from the shelf. It was the first part of the *Octavia*. She turned a few leaves, looked at a couple of engravings, and began to read the passage which describes the meeting of the sublime Tyridates and the lovely Neronia. She took the stout volume, which was very heavy, in both hands

and placed it on the lap of Erdmute. "*Vous lirez, chère Bel-lin?*" In her beautiful deep voice Erdmute von Bellin began to read the prose of the Duke Anton Ulrich. "When he beheld her he was so overcome by immeasurable love and delight that he straightway fell at her feet and embraced her limbs. She had saluted him with most distinguished reverence. But when she saw this proof of his feeling which she had not expected, she felt it the more keenly, and hastily tearing herself from his embraces she said: 'How, great king! Do you forget who you are and who I am?'" But at this point Sophie Charlotte laid her hand upon Erdmute's arm and turned her face to Thomasius, who had been waiting for just that.

"The Herr Professor probably does not approve of mere romances?"

What a curious sound German had on her lips! Not that it was incorrect. Though she spoke French all day, yet her use of her native speech was fluent and precise. But exactly as though she had acquired it! Out of that vivid mouth the native sounds came as though uttered by a well-trained automaton. When she spoke French it had the touch of nature.

Thomasius felt as sure of himself as behind his professorial reading-desk.

"If Your Highness will permit me to say so, I am a decided lover of romances. I have already twice perused the *Octavia* of His Serenity of Wolfenbüttel and have an uncommon admiration of it. When it is completed we shall find therein the entire outline of Roman history."

"So monsieur condescends only to useful romances?"

"I do not reject the mere love-stories, either; from them, too, a knowledge of the world may be gained. I distinguish four kinds of romances ——"

"I am glad that the learned gentlemen of Leipzig approve of books which are suitable for ladies."

"I beg Your Highness's most gracious pardon, but you are not to regard me as the rule; I am the exception. Leipzig is a genuine fortress of pedantry. Our cultivated minds are not so liberal as those of Berlin."

"I have been in Leipzig and conversed with some of your eminent professors."

"That visit is still constantly discussed. Your Highness, on that occasion, mentioned several books which were wholly unknown in academic circles."

"Yes, they were astonished to see a little Princess stride so bravely in the realm of learning. But indeed I do not strive after fame; I only adore philosophy."

"Into whose temple the graces enter all too rarely."

Was it not Cicero who wrote: *Doloris medicinam a philosophia petio?*

Heavens! She had said *petio*! It wanted but a hair's-breadth for Thomasius to have corrected her mistake in Latin and to have said *peto* in an emphatic manner. But his friend Besser, knowing the nature of scholars, swiftly and without raising his foot, kicked his heel into his friend's ankle. That caused the latter to reflect. But he could not help saying, somewhat disapprovingly:

"Cicero, Your Highness, was really a dry fellow without any genius, though 'tis not I who should say so, seeing that, like himself, I am a jurist by profession and a philosopher only for my own delight."

Besser took a step forward. "My friend, Your Highness, is more than that. As a satirist he rivals the liveliest wits of France. In his portmanteau he carries a pasquinade against Aristotle. If you command him he will fetch it."

"I cannot command monsieur. But we would all be grateful."

"It is my ambition to cleanse our German learning of pedantic dust for the sake of a more reasonable and polished mode of living. It is for this reason that I oppose Aristotle, by whom the heads of our young people are made both coarse and dull."

He bowed and ran over to the castle and up the stairs. He found his manuscript at once, but on his hasty way back he took the wrong turning and found himself in another wing of the building. He wandered hither and yon, when he saw ten paces ahead of him one of the red-coated guardsmen emerging from a narrow passageway. Without looking around, the man strode swiftly down the hall. Thomasius cried out after him: "Stop! How do I get out of here?" Strangely enough, the man, obviously a servitor of the Crown-Prince, instead of stopping, ran all the faster. For a moment Thomasius had the impression that he had seen this tall man with the robust shoulders and the firm tread before. Suddenly the red-coat had vanished. Finally Thomasius reached a dark stairway and groped his way past the kitchen into the open. He found himself, however, on the other side of the castle, so that he had some distance to traverse to reach the summer-house again. Here, in the meantime, the mood had changed. To pass the time until the professor's return Besser had very felicitously sung a song of the Venetian gondoliers which Christoph Dohna had accompanied on the Lute. The Crown-Princess lifted her hand bidding the little Count to cease his strumming. Thomasius was invited to be seated and to read.

He read for almost an hour when Sophie Charlotte, although the parodied life of the king of philosophers had seemed to amuse her highly, left the pavilion. The satiric dish seemed

not so tasty to the other ladies. But since the Crown-Princess had laughed with so much appreciation, they had all listened attentively. What Thomasius had discovered was that Aristotle had not been the venerable person depicted by the pedants, but a flighty fellow from the beginning. At school he was so poor a student that he had to leave before the completion of his studies. Next he wasted his inheritance in loose living. Thus reduced in his circumstances, he entered the Athenian army, but since he soon discovered that a soldier has to carry his skin to market he inquired concerning his best interests of the oracle of Delphi. The answer was that a young man, equally lacking in money, genius, and courage, could do nothing better than to devote his life to philosophy. Hence he attended the lectures of the famous Professor Plato and studied there for many years. Since he had wasted his fortune on banquets and gaming and wenches, he took up on the side the manufacture of hair-powder and rouge and beauty spots, the needs of women being well known to him. And when the King of Macedon needed a private tutor for the young prince who was afterward to be Alexander the Great, Aristotle was recommended for the position. At court his former accomplishments served him well. He provided not only instruction for his pupil, but diversions for the latter's mamma, the Queen Olympias. He fell violently in love with this lady and attended her constantly. She let him tie the strings of her sandals, but showed no inclination to exchange kisses with him, firstly, because he rarely washed his mouth, and also because she was already supplied with a lover. In the end he had his will of her, for all that.

At this point a page appeared in order to inform Her Highness that the Crown-Prince was about to take a drive and expected her to join him. The carriage stood by the draw-

bridge which led from the castle across the narrow inlet to the village. For several days past Frederic had regularly taken a drive in the evening through the forest on the way to Berlin. He would lie in wait for the mounted messengers who brought him documents from the city and would tear open the letters with his own hands. Marie Amalia and her faithful followers accompanied Sophie Charlotte to the bridge. On the way back to the pavilion Altorf joined them.

The Crown-Prince had kept him all this while in his study without much being accomplished. The course of this afternoon had been most curious. First Frederic wanted to hear again the terms of the hereditary treaty between his ancestors and the Dukes of Liegnitz and Brieg, although he knew it by heart. To what purpose? The Silesian family had died out; their lands were unhappily in the Emperor's possession. All stale stories. Everyone knew that the old Elector had given up his claims to Silesia and permitted himself to be bought off with the little frontier strip of Schwiebus. The secret treaty had been ready for signature for two weeks and only the inexplicable delay of the Austrians prevented its final confirmation. Why should the Crown-Prince inquire after these matters now? He was absent-minded; he stood with his face to the window and then turned back and gave Altorf a sharp glance. He seemed on the point of saying something, but interrupted himself and strode back and forth. Afterward he went out and Altorf heard him unlocking the desk in the adjoining room. Half an hour later he returned and wanted to know at what sum in imperial thalers the value of this territory of Schwiebus could be estimated, and how many inhabitants, hamlets, and villages it comprised. Altorf had not been prepared to give this information. He offered to obtain it from the archives in Berlin next day. But this the Crown-Prince

forbade him to do with, as it seemed to Altorf, quite unnecessary violence. Once more he walked up and down and inquired after trivialities. Thus things continued until he ordered the carriage and sent for his wife.

The company in the pavilion of Dying-Blue broke up early today. The reading of Herr Thomasius had wearied Marie Amalia and she felt her headache coming back. From the wall of the pavilion Altorf looked over toward Erdmute, who had just arisen to offer her arm to the Princess. On passing the bookcase she laid three fingers for just a fleeting moment upon a certain volume. Altorf regarded this volume, the *Octavia*, fixedly, and before leaving the room behind the others he opened it at the hundredth page. On the margin in tiny penciled script he saw the figure 12.

When Altorf was about to withdraw after the evening meal, Besser sought to hold him back. The huge councilor and poet, who was in liquor, wanted to pull him down on a chair. But Altorf was more agile and eluded him. "Thou art no proper Christian man," roared Besser, "or else thou hast a kitchen wench into whose bed thou wouldst creep!" But the majordomo, frightened by the noise, took Altorf's part, seeing that His Highness had ordered the secretary for five o'clock in the morning. For the Crown-Prince was an excessively early riser and was up and about at four. This would hardly have pleased his young wife, whose habits were quite different, had the couple ever shared the same chamber.

★(4)★

FULLY dressed, Altorf had been lying on his bed for nearly an hour. When he arose the moon shone bright without. He could have wished the satellite to be less radiant. His room was in the old side-wing not far above the ground, and for a person of some agility it was not hard to slide down the wall. He had done that a week ago, but had rued it later, since he had been forced to pass the kennel and had awakened the hounds. Hence there was nothing left for him to do but grope his way through the long corridors. He approached the basement hall with the balcony, but seeing a light in it retreated toward the servants' quarters, where the defective old flooring groaned under his tread. Here the darkness was complete. But he knew every step of the way, found the service stairway, slipped past the dark kitchens into the cellar, and leaped through the cellar window into the open. Because he had frequently stopped to listen all this had taken some time and he heard midnight chime from the church of Köpenick. There were, luckily, no sentries about the castle, which, being surrounded by water, was inaccessible when the bridge was drawn. Carefully he made his way under the trees along a low covered balcony from which steps led to the park, and waited to see whether anyone was descending. Nothing stirred. He came to a somewhat wild part of the

gardens where in the days of the old Elector the court had come in summer to drink beer. The stone tables were still there. Between the bushes on a base nearly as high as himself, arose the stone statue of a huntsman carrying a spear; at its feet lay a gigantic boar's head. When Altorf reached this spot the head and hat of the weather-beaten statue shone brilliantly in the moonlight. He went deeper into the bushes and still saw no one. But when he turned again there stood in the shadow of the statue's base Erdmute von Bellin.

"The dark knight keeps one waiting!"

"Dearest lady, forgive me! A young page of Zeitz lies in the next chamber; I had to wait in great pain till he came from his drinking, else had I run into his arms."

The lady wore a long fur-trimmed coat. She drew it tightly about her and went over to a stone bench.

"The nights are still cold. This is the last time, Altorf, that I shall come to the boar's head. They will end by discovering us. I believe my maid heard me slipping from the room; the Princess might call me to her bedside and I would not be there. She does that from time to time."

"Aye, we shall say farewell to the boar's head and to all else here. Have you reflected on my words, Erdmute?"

"Marie Amalia is very sad. She has cried night after night; that makes her head ache. She is head over heels in love with Zeitz."

"Did you reflect, Erdmute? Will you go with me?"

"The Mecklenburger isn't so very bad, but she has set her heart on Zeitz."

"In Hamburg we can board the first ship bound for England. I have good friends in London."

"Oh, Altorf, what things you say! But say them, dear friend; they sound fair, even though nothing come of it all."

"You cannot stay at this court. When your Princess marries, a few months from now, all will be changed. And you must go back home. Did you not tell me on this very spot that he should never touch you more?"

"Aye, Thomas, it is sad enough. But do not forget that I am a mother and that two small sons ask after me. The older will soon be six."

"With me, Erdmute, life will begin anew for you."

"So say all men. Later in London you will forget."

"I am not like these courtiers. What have I to do with them? I was taught to live and to die for that which I hold in honor. We do not leave the women whom we chose."

"Altorf, who are the people from whom you are descended? And is it true that you deny Jesus our Lord?"

"Who said that?"

"Besser! You are to know that it has been observed that we are not indifferent to each other. He laughed and said I was not to trust your vows, for that you believe in nothing."

"Besser composes pleasant verses. But his profession is that of a licksplittle. That kind will rob a man of name and fame to make an idle minute pleasant."

"Even the name you bear is said not to be your own, and your father to have been a rope-maker in Poland."

"All that Besser says he heard from my own lips, but he gives it a malevolent turn. My father, Erdmute, was a Franconian nobleman; he died in his youth. Studying at Altorf, he heard news of the great Polish university at Cracow which existed then and where men were inducted into a divine freedom. Many nobles of Germany gathered there and he too went thither and became a pupil of those teachers. In that place no difference was made between baron and burgher and my father laid aside his knightly name and called himself

after the University of Altorf, where first the light had shone into his mind. At Cracow there was a rule that even the well-born should learn a trade, so as to escape the vanity of mere learning and also that they might, at need, earn their bread by the work of their hands. For this reason my father apprenticed himself to a rope-maker."

"Was your mother there, too?"

"Hear me! More than a century ago there came to Germany from Italy my ancestor, Fausto Sozzini, the scion of a noble Siennese house. He stood in high repute at the Florentine court, but left all that behind him, drawn northward by the radiance of evangelical freedom. But he could remain neither in Switzerland nor in Germany, for the Calvinists and Lutherans were as fierce as the Papists. Hence he fled to Poland and founded the Academy of Cracow. This Fausto had an only daughter who married a Polish knight. 'Twas their son Andreas who received my father into his house and gave him his daughter in marriage. Soon thereafter the congregation was outlawed and the academy destroyed, and my childhood was passed in wandering from land to land."

"But one must believe in Jesus!"

"Jesus was a good man; no better ever lived. But my reason cannot admit that he was a God. Is one to declare what one does not understand? I feel the divinity in nature. When you behold the moon, does not the sublimity of it come over you?"

"Aye, that is true. But ——"

"And we are a part of nature; nature is within us and draws men and women together. Can that be evil which speaks from us? The false old laws cause all our unhappiness!"

"And they bear heaviest upon women, those laws! I was fifteen when my guardian married me off to Bellin. He was

twenty years older than I and got drunk every day; the house was like a thieves' den. Yet otherwise, having no fortune of my own, I would have been dependent on the charity of kinsmen."

"Aye, you women rarely find the courage to rebel."

"What is one to do? Often in his drunkenness he raised his hand against me, but never dared to strike. Had he done that, I should certainly have run away. He was enraged because I read books instead of merely pickling the cabbage. I dare not think what would have become of me had not the Elector gone on that hunting expedition in our part of the country two years ago. Her Serenity saw me at the reception and took a liking to me and desired me at once for her daughter. The Elector summoned Bellin, who came home cursing like a heathen but not daring to resist the sovereign. So he took service again and is in Prussia and I am here and the children ——"

"Weep not, Erdmute!"

"Could you love a woman, Thomas, who abandons her children? Oh, my little darlings! Bellin's old aunt and the pastor have them in charge, but when they are grown they will be pigs and drunkards like all the rest. You may speak of your lickspittles at the court, Altorf, but at first the court seemed like a paradise to me—women who do not talk of sausages and cows and men who do not always smell of beer."

"Their handsome clothes make them no better. Slaves they are like the others."

"That is very true. Aye, it is so. The Princess fares as I once did. Three months ago the Mecklenburger came, even as many princes come to Berlin, and was presented to her. A month later His Serenity summoned her and told her that

she was betrothed. She thought her heart would stop, but she dared not utter a word. She curtsied and kissed her father's hand. Now she weeps. I don't like him, she says. It will kill me; you will see that it will kill me. And since that little Zeitz is here she grows worse and worse. There is no happiness here at court."

"Let us flee, Erdmute! I have a presentiment of some curious happening. The Crown-Prince looked at me with a quaint, strange fixedness today, as though he wanted to penetrate me. All the while he ran up and down. He said nothing, but he has some peculiar plan."

"My friend, I know very well the plan that he has; it is maddening him."

"And you know what is troubling him?"

"Aye, but I won't tell you."

"I have the strangest feeling. I should like to flee without seeing him again."

"Is that the intrepidity of a gentleman who desires to carry off a married lady? There will be worse things out in the wide world."

"It is not fear, but he had such desperate looks today. How were it if we fled this very night? It will all be known some day, why not tomorrow? We can take a boat and row to the city and thence go by the fast coach to Hamburg."

"Oh, oh, what a passionate knight! Suppose he sends mounted men after us?"

"A secretary and a lady in waiting are not such important personages. Before that was determined on we would be nearly at the frontier."

"Marie Amalia would weep herself to death. Nay, we can't do that. But the Crown-Prince is not thinking of you; he is thinking of some one else and no wonder that he rages about

like a murderer. You are not the only one in this castle, dear friend, who is pursuing a lady."

"Is he pursuing you?"

"Nonsense! Not me. If you must know, he is pursuing his own wife and without the slightest success. I thought all the private secretaries knew that."

"'Tis very strange."

"You are not very experienced and that is what I like about you—your kind and honest ways. I would not meet by night here at the boar's head one of the sophisticated Don Juans of the court. Can't you see the expression with which Sophie Charlotte regards him and how she looks away from him when she speaks? I am almost scared of that young lady. I am five to six years older than she and seem to myself like a village maiden in comparison. Her Highness seems not to be made of flesh and blood, like the rest of us. Her husband is not enviable."

"Does she not, then, receive the Crown-Prince's visits?"

"Since the child was born he has not crossed her threshold, and if the little Prince had not died—. But now it is said that she will have to yield at least once for reasons of state. He is all aflame for her. Last week there came a necklace. It is wonderful! Think of having such things! He ordered it from Fromont in Paris; it cost four thousand ducats and the Crown-Prince is hard pressed for the money. Nor is she a bit grateful. He, again, is incapable of acting the part of a lover. He is always the Crown-Prince and would desire her to woo him. She will not. Then suddenly he demands and is refused."

"And is it this that makes him so strange?"

"What else? He thinks of it day and night. Marie Amalia suspects it, too, for she is fond of her brother. Three weeks

ago he wanted to enter his wife's room by night. Her maid, at her mistress's bidding, barred the way. He struck the woman in the face with his fist. Everybody in the castle knows that."

"Had she no fondness for him when she married him?"

"She! And who asks princesses after their inclination? The House of Brunswick desired to get on in the world and so this alliance with the House of Brandenburg was planned and arranged by her mother and the Minister of State Grote. Before that they would have liked to marry her in France. A visit was made to Paris and a prince selected. But King Louis made a different decision and they were helpless. These Hanoverian women have heads, but no hearts. Philosophical conversation goes on from morning till night. Wasn't her teacher the great Leibniz himself. She writes him letters by the yard and she said to Madame Pöllnitz: '*Je suis vraiment une philosophe,*' for my mother is the new Minerva, my teacher is the modern Plato, and I am married to Æsop—reborn."

"Does she call him her Æsop?"

"Aye. Wasn't that a hunchbacked Greek who wrote fables?"

"Did the Crown-Prince hear of this?"

"I don't know. But he did hear what his father said when the child was born. That must have stung him to the quick. Haven't you heard? I do not think that things can remain as they are. Some day the Crown-Prince will flee, else the eternal misery will destroy him. There is a cruel enmity in the Electoral house. The Elector's wife is the worst; she desires everything for her own sons. She was kind to me, yet am I sorry for the Crown-Prince. His Serenity said that time that his son having a child was proof that God still blessed the weak with miracles."

"What scoundrel told the Crown-Prince that?"

"The old man has a bitter, angry heart. He said it in front of five people; how should it not have been repeated? Now the Crown-Prince is wounded in his honor and desires to prove himself. It was a great misfortune that he lost his first wife so young, three years ago. He really clung to her; they had grown up together in Kassel and were cousins. It must have been a sad time in court."

"I have heard those dark stories, too. One must not believe everything."

"But Madame von Danckelmann told Madame Krosigk all about it. The former Crown-Princess drove from Köpenick to Berlin hale and well. She sickened that very night and died within a week. The doctor said it was the smallpox. But in every house in Berlin the people were saying that she had been poisoned because she was with child."

"Danckelmann had better hold her tongue or let her husband gag her. Did this rumor reach Sophie Charlotte?"

"The Krosigk is her best friend and tells her everything; they are both from Hanover. Hence she fears Her Serenity like hell fire."

"Oh, my Erdmute, your noble heart should not live amid such intrigues! I don't believe that our old world here can grow any better; the corruption goes too deep. I have long desired to emigrate to the new land of America. I enjoy the favor of a noble Englishman who is governor of the Colony of Virginia; he sent me a message a year ago to say that I would be welcome if I came to him. He would give me an estate with lakes and forests of my own, for everything exists in great plenty there. Let us go thither! You will have other children, Erdmute! There are no princes nor courtiers in that new world. But over the green forests on the banks of the

Potomac the moon shines with as silvery a light as over the Spree, and the redskinned children of nature are purer and happier than yon serfs in the village between their walls of clay. We shall be happy, too."

"How beautifully you speak, Thomas, and how fond I am of you! But can all that be? Were it not better for us both if you saw the world somewhat as does this Leipzig professor who read us his long tractate today? His eyes nearly jump out of his head with worldly wisdom. How can I follow you, seeing that Bellin has the legal rights? I should be nothing but a runaway woman, after all."

"To me you will be a very saint, and in Virginia no one asks after one's legal documents."

"I have a better notion. It is well that the Crown-Prince likes you. Everyone knows that you are in high favor. If you will only be wise you can turn things greatly to your advantage. But you must be wary, for he is easily hurt. From his childhood on he was shy on account of his unhappy infirmity and his father's dislike of him."

"He is wholly under Danckelmann's influence and that is best for him."

"I am not sure whether that situation will remain as it is. Danckelmann unbends too little and the Crown-Princess hates him. I do not say that you are to plot against Danckelmann; nay, show him all respect but, above all, hold fast to the Crown-Prince! How long can things remain as they are? The sovereign in Berlin is very ill; the end may be a matter of months. And it were well that the end should come, for otherwise that evil woman who desires everything for her sons and whom the old man cannot resist will yet rob him of land and folk. If you do truly love me, do all in your

power to gain the Crown-Prince's favor. When once he is our sovereign and you have a place in his counsel, then ——"

"I understand. A divorce!"

"The consistory always makes difficulties, but the sovereign can grant divorces if he will. Didn't the Elector grant a divorce to that old Frau von Canitz from the general in order that she might marry a French beggar as her third husband? At her age it was surely not necessary to change husbands. The Crown-Prince will help us if you are useful to him, and Marie Amalia will intercede for us, too. That is our only hope, Thomas; we must wait for that. London and Virginia are not for me."

"That may take years—years before the Elector dies and years thereafter. My blood cannot endure it. Shall a man be denied the right that nature gives him over his beloved?"

Erdmute von Bellin took his hand and sighed. She arose and looked out over the park.

"How impatient you are! Ah, I know that you are no vulgar seducer and we might—we might slip for a moment into the blue pavilion yonder. But you will not forsake me? You, who believe in nothing, will keep faith?"

"I swear to you, Erdmute, and I do believe in eternal nature and in the good in man. May the nymphs of this river and the dryads of these trees hear my vow."

"We must go separately under the beech trees. See how bright the moon shines on the meadow in front of the pavilion! If anyone were watching at an attic window of the castle, we would be espied! We must stay in the shadows. Approach carefully; I will open the door!"

★(5)★

THE huge negro body-servant, Ordu, in his ample blue silk robe and his yellow turban, was awaiting Altorf at the door of his master's study. This Ordu, whom the captain of the Brandenburg frigate *Crown-Prince* had sent to Berlin several years ago, was a negro of the land of Guinea, on the coast of which Frederic William had planted a colony. At this early-morning hour there was but little light in the large but somewhat low-ceiled study. In the center behind the table, his face turned toward him who was entering, stood the Crown-Prince. He did not stir when the secretary bowed, but beckoned him to approach. He did not yet wear his wig; his own hair hung uncombed down his forehead. Altorf observed his extraordinary pallor. The Prince said nothing, but pulling himself together as by a great sudden effort raised his hand toward the negro. Immediately the flat shoes of Ordu with their upward-curving points glided toward another very low door which had been set scarce perceptibly into the wall near the windows. The man who was admitted was so tall that he had to bend his head on entering; he seemed at first glance but one of the red-coated guardsmen of the Prince. But when Altorf observed the man's countenance closely his surprise almost robbed him of composure. For the lackey in the scarlet coat and the short Hungarian boots was none other than Baron Wolff, the chaplain of the Austrian ambassador.

"Altorf, thou art acquainted with this gentleman. Mark well what I say. It is my will that this gentleman is to confer with thee. Reply to him openly, even concerning the most secret affairs of the state. This gentleman has my entire confidence. Hence thou canst speak freely to him without injury to thy sworn duty. If he gives thee a secret commission, thou art to carry it out as though I had commanded it. From now until evening thou art under his orders; thereafter I will tell thee what more thou art to do. Of all this thou wilt utter no word to any; it would cost thee my favor!"

The Crown-Prince walked over to the great door and locked it from within. He left the room by the little secret door without turning; the blackamoor followed him.

"Let us sit down, monsieur," said the disguised priest amiably in his resonant voice. "His Highness expressed himself as though you were to be under my orders. I should like, in fact, merely to ask your opinion. Will you give it to me?"

"I have been distinctly commanded to answer."

"His Highness could very well have told you in his own person all that I am to say. But, you see, God happened to make these high personages in a certain manner. I have lived much at courts and have often observed them to be afflicted with a certain timorousness. Don't you think it most curious that His Highness should use me as the interpreter of his will?"

"I have ceased to find anything curious."

"O monsieur, you are too unbending. You are a philosopher, a foe of the vulgar Christian faith in miracles and a friend of the eminent Monsieur Pierre Bayle of Rotterdam. You mean to say that it is not extraordinary that, unknown to all the world, a Roman priest disguised by a red lackey's coat

should be sitting in the study of the Protestant Crown-Prince of Brandenburg?"

"I am well aware that the venerable Jesuit fathers can turn the extraordinary into the usual!"

"Well then! Pray do not guard your tongue. I understand well why you should hate us. Speak from your heart! I am at your service."

"I was not given to understand that His Highness had commanded me to engage in a disputation concerning the Society of Jesus."

"Why not? His Highness, monsieur, has intrusted you to my care, and if it pleased me I might, without stirring, dispute with you for eight hours concerning ourselves, seeing that such an enemy as you has been, as it were, delivered helpless into my hands. Suppose I were minded to convert you!"

"What! Is it possible that his Highness has ——?"

"Turned Catholic? No! God's future plans we cannot know. All Protestant princes will return to us because ours is the best company. Nor do I think it will even take long. But it is not for any such purpose that I have come to Köpenick. Among us tasks are divided. Some are sent as fishers of erring souls; my business is to swallow whole countries. I am one of the very worst!"

"I should not have supposed the baron to concern himself with anything less!"

"Exactly. I see you smile. I, too, delight in a cheerful mood, however serious the affairs in hand. I wonder if you are as hungry as I? The daylight is hard on the stomach and I have slept as little as you."

"As I?"

"I saw you walking in the park less than two hours ago. I also take exercise by night because I must pass my days

hidden in the castle in a little room. You came from yonder pavilion and jumped into the cellar when you came back into the house. I could have guided you more comfortably up a secret stairway that rises here from the water."

Wolff glanced at Altorf for a moment. Then he arose and tapped at the small door, whereupon Ordu at once stuck in his turbaned head. The Jesuit addressed him in soft slow words, while the Moor, who understood extremely little of the language, stared at the speaker's mouth and eyes. After a while he brought a silver bowl of mulled wine and a platter of cold meats.

"I said that you hated us and that I could well understand your feeling. The great-grandson of the famous heretic Faustus Socinus cannot but bear the Church a grudge."

"You know concerning my descent?"

"Wherever I am, I have the habit of making inquiries concerning important persons. If not much is known concerning anyone, that attracts me the more and I write abroad for information. You can easily understand that few things can remain hidden to one of some authority in the Society of Jesus. We have informants in the remotest spots."

"How have I deserved the confidence of these revelations?"

"It is no great secret, monsieur. The tiniest court has its secret scribes. Shall a society which manages the very great affairs of the world behave like a parcel of choir-boys?"

"I dare to say that I have been slandered."

"Not at all. You are known in various places, especially in Holland. Is it not true that you lost your father through violence at a most tender age and had to flee from Poland at your mother's breast when the faith of the Socinians was proscribed ——"

"By the Jesuits!"

"Nay, by king and council, though not without the influence of our Order. After varying adventures and while still a child you came to Holland with your grandfather, the venerable and brilliant Andreas Wiszowaty. Later you studied at Leyden and in German cities and remained allied to the Church's enemies. From Amsterdam you went to London, where you associated with the rebels—the sons of the murderers of King Charles I. Soon thereafter you returned to Holland, hoping to enter the service of the Prince of Orange. But the Stadtholder seemed to think that there were enough republicans in Holland; a few had better be sent to Germany. Thus he caused you to be recommended to Herr von Danckelmann."

"And your intention, Baron, in saying all this? Is it to intimate that I am a plotter and dangerous to the throne of Brandenburg?"

"No. Yet the German princes are not fond of having in their service people who have been the familiar comrades of regicides. The Prince of Orange is not so particular. 'Twas he who sent that long Scotchman to Berlin, that Lord Leven who plots to overthrow his lord and king in England. Orange is well served at this court."

"Why don't you inform the Crown-Prince that you consider me a spy?"

"Because it would be false. I know you to be a man of honor."

"I would that we could arrive at the affair for the sake of which I was commanded to come here."

"At once! You will soon understand me better. Clever people always understand each other. Your heresies do not annoy me. I have had friendly discussions with great enemies of my faith—with rabbis and Turkish mollahs. There is little difference in the thoughts of good men."

"Magnificent! But if your Order is so tolerant, why do you not tell the kings, as did the illustrious John Milton, that they are to permit all men freely to profess their religion? How does it concern the government? Was it right that the Roman emperors caused the Christians to be burned?"

"It is well that you are speaking to a Papist and a Jesuit and not to a Lutheran preacher of this land. Milton, who declared the common people to be the rightful lords of the state?"

"I thought that was the opinion of the Jesuits, too. Did not your Brother Bellarmine teach that the people has the sacred right to depose its king?"

"You are an excellent controversialist. Aye, thus wrote Bellarmine. But such is not the opinion of the Society of Jesus. The society has an hundred opinions. I differ from Bellarmine. How can one permit the bestial mass to arrange the state according to its pleasure?"

"According to that, Baron, the reproach of Pascal against your Order seems correct. You have teachers among you who prove one thing and others who prove the contrary. You have different moral rules for the devout and for the worldly, aye, even for sinners, provided that the sinners are among the mighty."

"How well informed you are! I suppose you also read the declaration of Pascal that the Jesuits urged the Pope to issue the bull against Galilei in which the theory that the earth moves is condemned. You probably do not know that when Pascal came to die a girdle of thorns which must have tormented him cruelly was found about his middle. He wore it in order to be reminded in every hour of death. For he was a very great Christian."

"Which makes the more convincing his accusation against

your Order that its aim is not to make men better, but to rule them."

"He was right. Observe well: he did not say that we take men's goods by guile in order to enjoy them ourselves. He does not deny that all our actions are guided by the desire of serving the faith. This aim is so great that all else is little in comparison. God's own laws are of less importance when God Himself is to be defended. I speak frankly. If you are but a wit whose purpose it is to write satiric pamphlets, my confidence is wasted. I see more than that in you. Pious men willing to do God's bidding, Altorf, exist without our Order. But men who know how to guide the great are few. What did it avail to thunder the list of their sins to emperors and kings? Hundreds of great preachers did that and the world grew worse the while and the terrible schism came. Granted, monsieur, that the Crown-Prince were to give you his full confidence, and I know that he is about to do so—granted again that you desired to guide him toward some great goal, would you remind him every morning rudely of his failings? This is what Herr von Danckelmann does; let him beware. It is made a reproach to my Order that all kings select their confessors from among us because we make it easy for the great to sin. It is true that he who has seen much of the world will be slow to condemn. Is the angry man, the adulterer, even the murderer immitigably evil? God who looks deep may understand them better."

The Jesuit sat tense and earnest on his chair. The red lackey's coat did not detract from his dignity. Altorf did not reply. In a changed tone Wolff continued:

"You became acquainted early with the misery of the world. How is it to be helped? Best, perhaps, if wise and noble men, unknown to the rude throng, affect the great de-

cisions that are to be made. This company of the good, working in perfect harmony, should really come to rule the earth. Not, Altorf, in order to make it Catholic. It is my deepest wish that the world be voluntarily Catholic, but no one is to be compelled. Rather do I welcome the help of Protestants, even of free-thinkers. Hence I want you. I am thinking of the future of this country to which, by virtue of your gifts, you will one day mean much."

"You judge of me too favorably. You astonish me even more by granting heretics the right to existence in this hour of the great triumph of your Church. Is not the work of your Torquemada almost complete? Has the counter-reformation not triumphed? What have we not seen during a single year! The Palatinate is in the hands of a Catholic house. The Protestants are fleeing from France. James Stuart, with the help of French gold and Irish dragoons, is trying to make England Catholic again. How long will the North German princes resist?"

"Ah, who knows? We are not at all sure of England. I told you before, we want no land by compulsion."

"Truly? And France? Is your brother of Versailles who hears the King's confession of your way of thinking?"

"I do not know the opinion of Père Lachaise. If, however, he approves of violent measures against the Reformation, he represents an opinion which is outmoded and has been rejected by the wisest heads both of the Church and of my Order. This was not always the case. Once Galilei was condemned; today we are his disciples. The Church, and when I say the Church I mean its highest directors, desires no longer to convert any Christian to its will by blood. The Holy Father desires that all who are baptized live in harmony and raise the sword only against the common enemy of our faith.

Peace to the Christians, war to the Turks! It is the passionate prayer of Pope Innocent that it be granted his pontificate to see the Crescent defeated. But what does he live to see? The Turkish Sultan has no better friend than the French king. We have certain information that France spends great sums against the Emperor in Constantinople; Poland has been reconciled to the Turk, in order that it may no more aid the Emperor. But in this year, Altorf, there is granted us to see a great and almost miraculous sight: a German Christian army is encircling Budapest; the troops of Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed churches storm those walls with an equal heroism. There is yet lacking, although announced, one more strong army. When this arrives, too, Pest must fall. We shall crush the infidel even as I crush this orange. At Vienna, clerical coat or not, I commanded a cannon against him and sent, God be thanked, many a son of Allah to his whorish paradise. One flag is still missing. When will it wave at Budapest?"

"The troops of Brandenburg are even now marching through Silesia."

"Aye, they are marching slowly through Silesia. Will they ever reach the Danube?"

"You are still in doubt? For what purpose did the Elector dispatch his soldiers?"

"The Crown-Prince desires, as he told you, that we be frank with each other. That will be best. Important affairs are being placed into my hands and yours."

"Into mine?"

"As you will hear! How lucky that the old Elector is returning to his duty! Had he left life in the frame of mind of his recent years, history could not have done otherwise than attribute to him the ruin of the Empire. Whose fault is it

but his that Louis XIV dared steal Alsace and Strassburg? He threatened to stab the Emperor in the back. But his son will accomplish great things for the Empire. If only his father does not deprive him of too much territory!"

"The state cannot be divided."

"Monsieur, there may be all kinds of provisions in the will of the sovereign. The Crown-Prince has one brother and four stepbrothers."

"His brother is the Margrave Ludwig, who is entirely devoted to his interests. Young as he is, he has protested against the partition."

"But the mother of the four stepbrothers has not protested. She is at the Elector day and night. He is what he has always been—*sans foi ni parole*. All his life his dealings have been crooked. He will not hesitate to destroy the state which he himself has built. He is not the only prince who secretly envies his heir because the latter is young and will enjoy power when the father lies below. If a testament were to appear which breaks this great land into fragments, whither will the poor Crown-Prince turn for help except to the Emperor? Do you realize now in what important affairs we are involved?"

"But what I desire to know is why all this is confided to me, the youngest secretary in the Berlin chancellery? There are many eminent men in Berlin. If they do not serve the purpose of His Highness, there remains Herr von Danckelmann here in his own castle who was his boyhood tutor and has been in his service for twenty years."

"Danckelmann is a sour Calvinist, very wise and righteous, no doubt, but no fit friend for a sovereign unsure of himself and full of fears. You are a young man Altorf! I think I know the Crown-Prince thoroughly now. I have been conferring with him alone for three days, a prisoner in a little

hidden room, not daring to move, seeing no one but His Highness and the infidel Moor who gives me food and drink. I cannot bear it much longer; I am not so clerkly by nature; I love the fresh air and a horse under me."

"As on that night ride a week ago on your return journey from Dessau."

"By my faith, sir, how do you know that? But why do I ask. I caught sight for a moment in the corridor of the face of Dr. Thomasius of Leipzig; doubtless he found out my name at the office of the post. I suppose the story is all over Berlin. That is not so well!"

"No one knows. Quite casually Thomasius told me of meeting a gentleman of your name in the stage-coach and his description fitted you. I warned him to observe complete discretion."

"You did very wisely. But what persuaded you to give that vain and voluble pedagogue such good advice?"

"If Baron Wolff takes a trip to Dessau, one assumes that he went to confer with the uncle of the Crown-Prince. Next the question will arise why the Austrian ambassador should send so hurried a messenger to the Field-Marshal Anhalt who is staying at home with his sick daughter."

"Very acute! I shall commend your discretion to the Crown-Prince. But what do you yourself think of it all? It would please me to know what such a mind as yours makes of it. If the French Count Rébenac knew of it, what inferences would he not draw!"

"I must answer as you command. The first fact is that Baron Fridag has for years worked toward an alliance between the Elector of Brandenburg and the Emperor. The Elector is to renounce once and for all his claim to Silesia and to take in exchange the wretched little strip of Schwiebus.

But at this point Herr von Fridag does not sign the treaty that lies ready. The Elector asks daily whether the instructions from Vienna have not arrived; he grows more and more vexed."

"Continue, if you please!"

"Secondly, chance made me acquainted with your trip to Dessau to His Highness's uncle. Prince Anhalt is known to be an adherent of Austria through thick and thin; hence one may assume a secret negotiation between the Crown-Prince and the imperial court which has to do with the unsigned treaty."

"Right! Excellently reasoned. You shall learn more. But for the moment I will only ask whether you will render me a service. You see, of course, that the Crown-Prince desires to employ you. Danckelmann is useless in this matter. He is an excellent man for routine affairs, but of no use in the subtleties of high politics; he is a pedant and a stickler for words. The Crown-Prince cannot and will not initiate him into this matter. Danckelmann taught him grammar when he was a child; the impression has remained; before Danckelmann he still seems to himself the pupil on the school bench who must be on his best behavior. Profound secrecy, moreover, must surround the whole matter. Were it divulged at court, the Elector would blaze into wrath against his son. So he thought of you. I advised him to trust you, since it lies in your very blood and ancestry to esteem honor and suffer for its sake. Hence you will not betray this conversation of ours. But if you do not desire to do the will of the Crown-Prince, then I would have to counsel you to leave the castle in this very hour and even to say farewell to Berlin and to the country itself."

"To flee? But why?"

"Do you know princes so little? If you refuse, the Crown-Prince will hate you because you suspect his secretest thoughts. There would be nothing left for you to hope for at this court; once he is sovereign you would be in danger. Contrarily, if you do his bidding he will be grateful to you and you will rise."

"What is it that is asked of me?"

"First of all a service that requires only discretion. I cannot communicate with my ambassador; I dare not re-enter Berlin; the roads thither swarm with spies. Rébenac pays informers in this very house, and the Elector, doubly distrustful at present, causes his son to be watched. They smell a secret in the air in the castle at Berlin; they talk—nay, do not smile—of Jesuitical influence. Hence Baron Fridag dare not send a messenger thither. Hence you must go to Berlin to fetch us an urgent piece of news. The Margrave Ludwig came down day before yesterday with a slight attack of German measles. You are to inquire after his health in the name of his brother. You will be given several bottles of an ancient vintage to take to him. When you have done this, go to the chancellery and ask for news and then stroll through the streets. Take this letter and this silver ring with red stones and hide both about your person. The letter, as you see, is addressed to the imperial ambassador Fridag; it contains only a password. Seek out some one to take this letter to the Austrian embassy, but furtively follow your messenger to see that he delivers it. Next, by circuitous paths go to the inn At the Sign of the Otter near the Spandau gate behind the Chapel of the Holy Ghost. You must wait in the rear parlor of the inn even though it take two hours or longer, for the

way thither is difficult. When at last a man enters, put on this ring so that the stones show. As soon as no one else is present and nothing can be suspected the man will give you a slip of paper. Then hurry to your carriage and drive swiftly here!"

IT WAS not until late afternoon that Altorf returned to Köpenick. Without looking about him in the park he entered the castle gate. Before going up to the Crown-Prince's rooms he hoped on the floor of the Princess Marie Amalia to catch a glimpse of Erdmute. But as though suddenly wafted hither by magic, Ordu arose before him. Led by the Moor, he went to the upper story and by way of a long hall reached the wing on the river front which the Dutch architect Langerveld had added to the old castle for the Crown-Prince. They climbed to the very attic and there passed through a dark and narrow corridor. The Moor knocked at the door, rubbing his fingers against it in a peculiar manner. Stealthily the door was opened, and Ordu, in order to show that all was well, put his black hand through the opening. Now the door flew back. In the room stood Father Wolff, clad no longer in the red lackey's coat, but in a simple jacket of gray wool in which he looked like a fisherman or a peasant. The chamber had a slanting roof and one small window which gave on the broad river. Without asking, Wolff took from Altorf's hand the folded missive, read it and said:

"I must speak with His Highness. At this hour I dare not leave my room; hence he will come up. Do you wait at the end of the passage!"

Upon this passage, which ran the whole length of the castle,

gave a number of attic rooms. From afar Altorf heard Ordu descending the stairs. He returned, accompanied by another. It took nearly an hour until the father's door opened again and that other visitor retired. Now the negro came to summon Altorf to Wolff.

"It is the will of His Highness that I read you the message of which you are the bearer."

Altorf read the following Latin words:

"Dominus manet niger. Sequor rationem. Ultra timeo moram. Modestia mendicat toties."

"Do you understand that?"

"After a fashion. The Lord remains black—that is to say, the Elector's mood is still very bad. I follow reason—that might mean that one is inclined to yield. Beyond that I fear delay—well, further waiting might become dangerous. Circumspectness often goes begging—to be over prudent is often to remain empty-handed."

The Jesuit laughed.

"My dear sir, you are new at this profession! Do you think that you were sent to the parlor of that inn to fetch back such commonplaces? Only the first syllable of each word counts. Put these syllables together!"

Altorf read *"Domani sera ultimo momento!"*

"Tomorrow afternoon is the last moment. After our conversation of this morning the meaning must be clear to you at once. It leaves the ambassador only twenty-four more hours. If he does not sign within that period the Elector will consider the treaty as voided and will refuse forever an alliance with the Emperor. Day after tomorrow being Sunday, he can again pray for the health of the King of France. No triumph for the Empire or the world. Louis of France remains the victor!"

"That is most dreadful! But why is it inevitable?"

"All is not lost, Altorf. I will tell you one more thing: the decision lies here in this castle, in this very room. The decision is to be made—by you! You are astonished and frightened. No wonder! but a mysterious concatenation of accidents which I, to be sure, would call by a higher name, allies your hitherto simple fate to that of great empires. The Elector, who is implicated with France up to the neck and must get out of that situation or else be destroyed, is yet not willing to do for its own sake what both his honor and his advantage require. He wants to be well paid. Now he dug up in the archives an old parchment concerning the Silesian duchies of the Emperor—an utterly worthless rag. You have never heard that an Emperor was supposed to give up lands held by his ancestors simply because, two centuries ago, certain dukes or margraves made agreements concerning them. But he won't give in, refuses to do his duty as a prince of the Empire, and insists that he be compensated for Silesia by the strip of country named Schwiebus. Oh, that wretched little land—what sleepless nights has it not caused us! At first the Emperor was willing to give it up. But when he read the thing black on white he naturally remembered his coronation oath. The highest councilors threw themselves at his feet in the Hofburg. I may say that I am not without influence over the Emperor Leopold; I hastened to Vienna and discoursed on this matter to His Majesty for three days. In vain his father confessor and the confessor of the Empress, both brothers of my Order, sought to sooth his conscience. If an electoral prince can be so stubborn, said Leopold, it is the Emperor's privilege to be doubly so. Now in our desperation we came upon a detail here in Berlin which may seem equivocal to the ignorant, but which is conformable with the moral law because it saves the cause of highest veracity at inconsiderable expense. Field-Marshal

Anhalt, ever a true friend of the Empire, brought the matter to his nephew's attention, and the Crown-Prince gave his consent. You guessed quite rightly, then, that we are conducting a secret negotiation with him. The land of Schwiebus, which the Elector demands and the Emperor will not give up, will nevertheless be turned over to the Elector against the promise of the Crown-Prince to return it to the Emperor when he himself comes to the throne."

"The Crown-Prince has promised that? But that is high treason!"

"My dear sir, let us not call subtle actions by such harsh names! The deed of one who may be a sovereign tomorrow can hardly be treason."

"I cannot call it otherwise. His father has set his whole heart upon adding this territory to the state and while he lives the Crown-Prince is but his servant."

"Not in the same sense in which you or Meinders or Herr von Fuchs are servants. The Crown-Prince possesses certain sovereign qualities. It has happened more than once that an heir has obligated himself to make payments on the date of his coming into inheritance. What takes place after the Elector's death cannot hurt him. He will have the territory during his lifetime. The Emperor is the only one who runs any risk. Suppose the Crown-Prince dies first? He is sickly, he is not likely to make old bones. The agreement is not binding upon the next heir."

"Is he willing to set up an agreement?"

"Signed and sealed, of course. What else would we have to offer the Emperor? Even so the risk is great. When the time comes the Elector Frederic may not fulfill what the Crown-Prince Frederic promised. It is fair to add that I am convinced he will keep his word."

"Very well. It is his own affair. How does the bargain concern me?"

"I will explain, monsieur. When everything seemed settled and we were going to Potsdam next day to receive the signature in the house of Field-Marshal Anhalt there came the sudden news that Anhalt's daughter had fallen ill and that he had raced to Dessau. Today is the fifteenth day and disaster is almost upon us. Therefore I went to Dessau to fetch the Field-Marshal. But consider these children of the world—consider this Prince von Anhalt. He is a great lord who thinks of nothing but credit and gain; he begets bastards right and left and yet at the sick-bed of a little girl he howls like a King Charles spaniel that has been dropped from his mistress's lap. I spoke to him severely and he promised to be in Berlin at latest by this Tuesday. He is not yet here."

"Why do you need Anhalt? The Crown-Prince writes his agreement and the matter is finished."

"His Highness desires some one to stand by him, as is customary in all grave affairs. Out of sheer inexperience he might sign something that could bring disaster upon him. But we, on our side, have need of a witness as well, so that no one can say we forced the agreement from the Crown-Prince when he was not wholly conscious of what he was doing or else in his cups. Who is to be that witness? Wholly impossible that it should be Herr von Fuchs, who is setting up the public treaty with Austria; the other Ministers are not available. The Crown-Prince refused to consider Danckelmann. At last he hit upon you. You have been coming here for months and he likes you."

"I cannot do it."

"Truly? If that is your last word, come hither!"

He pressed against the wall and a low secret door sprang open. Beyond it one saw winding stairs.

"Bend down and slip out here. From the cellar a passage leads to the thick bushes by the river bank. There lies a boat. It is dark and no one will see you. Row down the river and run to the city! Leave Berlin, if possible, this very night or at latest in the morning and cross the frontier as soon as possible. Say no farewell to either friend or lover! Why do you hesitate?"

"Because I don't know what you mean."

"How innocent you are! Even this morning when you knew so little I told you that you must flee if you would not serve the Crown-Prince in this matter. Now that you know what you do know, refusal is equivalent to a sentence of death. You cannot issue from that door. The negro beast lies in wait; he will look into your eyes and execute an ungiven order. Such things have happened in castles before. Do you think the Crown-Prince will let you walk around Berlin with this knowledge that can destroy him utterly?"

"And if I do help him, would he not equally want to get rid of the sharer of the secret?"

"Not in the least! You will be discreet because else the Elector will have you hanged."

"Aye, I shall be the victim. Nothing can happen to either the Crown-Prince or to Anhalt."

"If it transpires during the Elector's lifetime the Crown-Prince, as things stand between him and his father, loses all. No, he will not be executed, but he will be imprisoned behind very strong walls, and who knows what may happen to him there! It is commonly rumored that at this court strange powders and tinctures are in use. High personages are said to have died unexpectedly. The Crown-Prince ——"

"Send a servant to announce me! I would speak with him myself."

"Impossible. He has placed the matter in my hands; he does not desire to discuss it with you. Altorf, at the core of him he is not unkindly. But a single word, aye, a look can frighten and vex him and he cannot endure it. I know several exalted personages who are of the same temper. All the ambition and desire of Frederic now have one aim: to be thoroughly in the confidence of the Emperor Leopold. He would sacrifice the land of Schwiebus six times in order to secure that confidence wholly. And do you know his motive?"

"Is it all on account of the testament and for security against the claims of his brothers?"

"That is one reason, but not the only one. Have you never heard any whispers concerning a great design that has been nourished in the old Elector's soul? I will reveal that to you, too. This country has grown far too great to remain a simple Electorate, like Saxony or Mayence. It must rise or it will fall into fragments again; there is no third possibility."

"The aim is a kingdom?"

"Aye, but the old man cannot accomplish it. His life is nearly over and he has many enemies and no friends, for he never kept faith with any. It is the son who will place upon his head the crown of the Wends. He wills it and will accomplish it."

"Good Heavens! It will take long ere Austria lets him be king."

"It will take years. But the work must be begun some day and this is the day. If Herr von Fridag does not receive the Crown-Prince's private agreement by tomorrow noon, the whole Austrian alliance is a thing of the past."

"In what a fatal quandary am I placed!"

"What did you expect, my dear young sir, when you sought the service of courts? Did you think that the nations were ruled with sugar-coated nuts? You should have stayed in Holland, in Delft or Haarlem and driven a trade in spices and lived a quiet life. Evil is the world's heart and evil are the machinations of its princes. But if you, the philosopher, and I, the priest, may have some influence, it is possible that the claims of the spirit will not be wholly neglected."

"In such high company we poor philosophers are likely to suffer the fate of the sheep in the fable whom the lion invited to join him in hunting. So your order is willing to raise the Protestant house of Brandenburg to the royal dignity?"

"Stranger things than that will happen. If your much-admired William of Orange drives the Catholic House of Stuart from the English throne there will be great friends to wish him luck! My dear sir, the Church of Rome desires no French world empire and therefore makes peace with the Evangelicals. The Church is on the side of peace even with those who differ from her in belief. Hence such a mind as yours should be on my side in this struggle for Brandenburg. Once Austria has the upper hand here France can be successfully resisted and victory will remain with the humane spirit of our Holy Father Innocent XI. Then will your friends in Germany or Holland be permitted to print their books. If France wins, woe to them! We Catholics would be permitted at least to serve God as our hearts dictate. You and yours will be dragged to the stake!"

Absorbed in their conversation, the two men had scarcely remarked that the dark had wholly fallen. At this moment the door opened and Ordu appeared carrying a light. Slowly another figure followed the negro. Recognizing that other, the two men arose. The Crown-Prince looked wretched; his

checks were yellow as wax. His nose was as long as his father's, but without the imperious curve, thin rather and drooping, with an upturned point that protruded from the delicate nostrils like a button. Usually he held himself carefully and well; at this hour his figure seemed shrunken and his deformity was obtrusive. The abnormal right shoulder rose into a shadowy hump. On his wig he wore a little three-cornered hat which made him look entirely like a wizened court dwarf. Behind his back the negro stood like a huge, exotic animal. Without regarding Altorf, Frederic turned to Wolff.

"Your conversation takes long."

"We are most humbly at Your Highness's service; everything is arranged. Herr Altorf awaits your command. Here is the document."

The Prince gave the secretary a long look. Yet his voice sounded relieved when, having received the paper from the Jesuit, he turned to Altorf.

"I am in some embarrassment and count on thee. Thy service will not be forgotten. Be prepared to leave with me at nine o'clock. Speak no word to any. Our conference, Baron, is at an end."

He touched his hat and went out. After a brief silence Wolff said:

"So all is set in motion. All I need do now is to disappear through yon hole in the wall. Perhaps I'll find a peasant on the road to drive me to the Stralau gate. Tomorrow I must leave the city with the ambassador early in order to be present at the meeting in the forest. By the way, Baron Fridag will give you a present of an hundred ducats for your service-ableness."

"I desire not the gift. If I serve in so dangerous a matter, I serve therein the Crown-Prince of Brandenburg."

"It is he himself who has condescended to command that this honorarium be given you. Hence you cannot refuse it, especially since you will witness the fact that His Highness himself will accept a large sum of money."

"Impossible! He takes money in payment?"

"Surely he does, Altorf. 'Tis always so in these affairs. His uncle, the field-marshal, stipulated on the spot that his nephew must receive ten thousand ducats against the agreement. The expenses of this castle are heavy and the Elector's gifts are meager. Nor must you think that our good Anhalt is left empty-handed. Another error. You will be in excellent company."

"He delivers up the land for ten thousand ducats?"

"A handsome sum. I had to go to Salzburg myself to fetch the coins from the mint; they wished to trust no one else. I pray God spare me many such affairs wherein I must be ambassador and courier and porter at once."

"With great labor his father acquires the territory and he sells it! I thought he yielded for the sake of state and crown."

"It is for the sake of state and crown. The money is quite apart. Do learn to know the world as it is! If one desires to guide it, one must long conceal one's better self. If you assume a rigid attitude he will take umbrage and always remember it. Good night! I must be gone."

That evening everyone walked on tiptoe and conversed in whispers. The Crown-Prince remained in his rooms. Later one heard him playing the clavichord. That afternoon the Crown-Princess had had a long conversation with Thomasius concerning M. Descartes and had discovered that the professor from Leipzig was not as well grounded in philosophy as he

was strong in satire. When she was informed that her husband begged to be excused from table, she determined to have a headache, too—she concluded that she had done more than enough for the little Morris William von Zeitz—and kept her ladies with her.

That blond little potentate ate his meal sadly and alone. The Princess Marie Amalia was absent, too. The latter's head really ached worse than for some time. At her couch sat Erdmute von Bellin and changed the cooling compresses.

The mood of the gentlemen was equally morose. Besser used as a target the chamberlain of Zeitz, but his wit fell flat; the Saxon youth was too dull to understand it. Thomasius sat in unaccustomed thoughtfulness. He wondered whether the day had been satisfactory. The morning's conversation with the Crown-Prince had been well enough. His Highness had discussed theological matters with genuine understanding and had been pleased when the Leipzig Lutheran admitted the Calvinists to possess a higher intellectual vitality. He had said that he had the desire to make of Brandenburg a free place for true science to flourish, in brief, a lesser Holland, and to attract brilliant people from abroad. A gracious glance had rested on Thomasius. The professor was afraid he had not done so well with Sophie Charlotte. But all the information concerning Descartes which this young lady had gathered necessarily surpassed that of a man who at the same time had to be a practicing lawyer, an active teacher, and a writer of books in order to support his family. He swore to himself to pursue philosophical studies with all his might for another semester.

Nor did the next morning begin well. Very early the Crown-Prince appeared in the park, moved about restlessly and alone in the great avenue, and went back into the house. At

the door Count Christoph Dohna had the misfortune to run into him and was harshly asked why he was not with his troops. The little Count, confident in his ability to make his master laugh, replied pertly that it would hardly pay to take the trouble, since the troops would probably never reach Budapest but be countermanded on the road. This drew from the Prince an outburst of rage that made everyone tremble. He went so far as to threaten the count with his stick. If he saw monsieur at dinner he would have him disgraced; the Elector had no use for officers who lounged about to talk folly and pay court to the ladies. Dohna crept to his room to pack his portmanteau.

At nine o'clock Frederic appeared on the stairs. The majordomo was ordered to have the new hunting-carriage in readiness. Whom did he command to accompany him? None. He was driving alone. This was so unusual, in view of the Prince's extreme love of ceremony, and pomp, that it petrified the majordomo. The Crown-Prince took none but his negro. Already seated in the carriage, he cried, as though the thought had just struck him:

"Is Altorf still here? He is to join me."

It was discovered that the secretary was indeed close by. When the carriage had proceeded for a while along the road to Berlin the coachman was ordered to turn aside down a new road cut through the forest. These forests of Köpenick were to be the great hunting-preserves of the Electoral family. The reigning sovereign had long given the castle and its domains to his heir. Since the latter, impelled by the family quarrels, passed most of his time here, he really knew the forest. Yet Frederic was not a hunter after the fashion of his ancestors. His frame was too feeble. His father, while in health, had passed each year weeks of passionate delight in the deep

forests around Küstrin or in Prussia, and had often, after the fashion of the hard old hunters, leaped upon the back of the wild boar and stabbed it to death.

The carriage reached a clearing covered with felled trees. Here the new road ended. The coachman remained behind while his master, accompanied by Altorf and Ordu, disappeared in the forest. On narrow hunters' paths, past swampy land, they entered the domain of the deer and at the end of half an hour reached a tiny lodge beside the path. No man was to be seen.

Leaving Altorf and the Moor without, Frederic entered the hut, which contained nothing but a wooden bench. At the end of some time there was heard the sound of a carriage, which stopped at a considerable distance. Two men appeared in the clearing; Altorf recognized the ambassador Baron von Fridag in very formal black and Wolff wrapped in a long coat. The latter seemed to be carrying a heavy burden. The cause was soon apparent. When the Crown-Prince invited the ambassador to be seated on the bench beside him, the Jesuit put down two strong sacks of leather. At once Frederic drew a sheet from his pocket and beckoned to Altorf to read it aloud. It was, signed and sealed by himself, the agreement set up by Wolff, according to which the heir of the throne of Brandenburg obligated himself to return to the Emperor the territory of Schwiebus upon his accession and at the same time permanently to renounce Silesia. He took the document from the secretary's hand and gave it to Fridag. The latter received it with a rectangular and profound Spanish curtsy, as though he were unworthy to touch it, and after a glance at the signature hid it in a leather portfolio. After the elaborate elegance of this gesture he begged humbly for leave to depart. He half glanced at the sacks of gold and, as though happening

to remember a trifle, said with infinite gentleness that he ventured humbly to suggest to His Highness that, seeing the coins were newly minted and easily recognizable, their expenditure be undertaken with the greatest care and discretion in order to avoid unseemly suspicion. Frederic, who had accompanied him for three paces, turned fiery red and looked back toward Altorf and Wolff. The Jesuit was just giving something to the secretary, who received it with an air of proud disdain. The scene was ended and the ambassador dismissed.

The Crown-Prince remained in the hut until he was informed that the other gentlemen had reached their carriage. Thereupon he returned as silently as he had come to his own. The heavy bags of gold were hidden under Ordu's blue tunic.

★(7)★

BAREFOOT along the forest way came a woman deep bowed under a heavy load of wood. She was frightened when she caught sight of a stranger. Swiftly she wanted to disappear among the trees and bushes, but the man in the gorgeous coat was upon her and held her fast by the arm. In her horror she wept and wailed at once, for it was the lord of the manor himself. She recognized his piercing eyes and powerful chin; she had often seen him from the door of her cottage driving to Malchow, while the men in the village street bowed to the very earth. Now he had caught her pilfering.

“Where didst thou steal the wood, woman?”

“O my dear God! O lordy! I swear to Your Lordship that this here is our own wood, aye, our own which was sold to my husband.”

“What is thy name?”

“God help me, my husband is Henning Drewes—and, as I hope to be saved, I’m no thief!”

The woman was young. He looked at her. She wasn’t pretty, but broad-hipped and well-rounded. Her short thin skirt went only to the knee and revealed strong, naked legs. He laughed and put his hands upon her breasts so that she flushed crimson. He was about to order her to throw down the wood. He reconsidered and gave her a gentle shove and let her go. Slowly he walked toward the manor-house and stopped at the

edge of the wood. He surveyed his property—land and thorpe and church. It gave him a feeling of dignity to be lord of so noble an estate. In all these huts his dependents trembled because he was here. If only the cares of his office had left him more time to spend here. But near as Malchow was to Berlin, he could drive out scarcely four or five times a year. The Elector kept him breathless day and night.

Near the house the Minister found the steward of his estate with bared head. He beckoned the man to follow him. In the hall the steward began to make his report. He was harshly interrupted.

“Keep your eyes about you! In broad daylight they steal wood from the forest.”

The steward, who had a rogue’s face, knew what was meant. He had seen the Drewes woman running. He knew that the cotters had no right to any wood except the fallen twigs. The devil take them! That had been the custom, too, under the former master.

“What have you done about the unoccupied farm?”

“No peasant wants to occupy it. House, barn, and stable are full of holes, so that the rain pours in; there wouldn’t be dry space enough for a pig.” The men would rather run away than go there. As it was, there weren’t people enough to do His Lordship’s work. Klaus, the brother of Henning, had enlisted as a soldier. The peasants were getting bolder all the time. To be sure, if His Lordship would have a new house built ——

“In order to have the lumber stolen thrice over before the building begins! Thou art a scoundrel and in league with them all. The law commands each peasant’s and serf’s son to take over a farm for the lord of the manor. The Elector desires all land to be cultivated. I’ll have them who run away

imprisoned for life. The serfs are there to work according to the will of God and of the Elector. Who is to harvest the grain and mow the meadows if the creatures can take French leave. If one disappears, proclaim it publicly, and if he's not found within four weeks take possession of aught that he's left, be it but a pair of stinking breeches. I'll teach these people to go a-soldiering! There's rabble enough in the land for the army without any one leaving my village. I tell thee to find some one for the empty farm. If he's an honest fellow, I'll lend him a hundred thaler for repairs. I've seen these snut-noses standing around. What do they? Are they married? 'Tis the will of our lord that none remain unwed. Whoever is twenty shall take him a wench, else he'll have his masters to deal with. They are to make children; we need hands. Get thee gone; I expect guests. Come tomorrow morning and bring me the farm-overseer with his account-book!"

In his study, which gave upon a large blossoming garden with a little lake, Herr Paul von Fuchs walked angrily up and down. He would make this lazy, lying rabble obey. It was he who in the Privy-Council had insisted on ever severer measures for the peasants and serfs. They are to obey and do their work and beget children in order that there may be people to till the fields and enrich the country. The squires were quite right in asking for help against the peasantry. Had he known how little profit and pleasure he would get from his estate he would have bought none. But having been recently ennobled he had desired to imitate the landholding families. Meinders had done the same and was nothing but a burgher's son, for all his pompous bearing. But Meinders, odious creature and ass that he was, seemed to know thoroughly how to manage and increase his substance. It must be the race. In Bielefeld, where Meinders came from, the people

were said to have spiders' fingers for holding on to money and to keep today's cheese rinds against tomorrow's dinner. Four estates Meinders had bought; they had all been dilapidated and he had made them all pay. He had so much liquid capital that he could compete with the Jews in making loans to the Elector. He, Fuchs, on the contrary, had not the art of making money stay. House, servants, carriage, and horses, extending hospitality—these things devoured him. Not to speak of women! The money flew, although he had gotten him enough during the last four or five years that he had been in the Privy-Council. His salary as Minister alone was two thousand thaler; he had the post-office and other profitable appointments. Aye, he had become somebody; even foreign states had become aware of him. Once they took him for the kind that would always remain a secretary entitled to a gratuity of two or at most five hundred thaler. Herr von Fuchs grimaced. He thought of the two thinly gilt silver candlesticks which the French ambassador, M. Verjus, had sent him as a wedding present, together with the little pomatum-box for madame. All of it wasn't worth a hundred thaler. He hadn't come so cheap in later years to Count Rébenac; one must give the Frenchmen their due. And now this clever and agreeable Baron von Fridag had even forced the stingy Austrians to become generous. Ah, and of that the good Franz von Meinders got nothing. That blockhead and stiff-necked friend of the French could not see that the friendships of great princes rise and set like stars according to laws which only your true adept understands. This Meinders was an able fellow when once the will of the sovereign was clear: he had no talent for leading that will as by an invisible hand. Let him console himself with his Roman classics and Elzevirs and

examine his rare volumes to see whether a page had been pasted in. He could become dangerous no more.

The lackey came into the room and announced that the priest was without with the village mayor and an old man of the community. The lackey was a young fellow in a sky-blue coat with an insolent expression, like all the servants of Herr von Fuchs. His Excellency commanded the priest to enter and the peasants to be sent away; he was in no mood to have them kiss his hand with their greasy snouts. Grinning, the lackey said it would be better to receive the parson in the outer hall, since he had come straight from the field with dung on his boots. But Herr von Fuchs insisted that he be brought in. Himself the child of a Lutheran manse in Stettin, he desired to show the cloth some respect. The parson and peasant admitted into the distinguished room trembled before his lord and patron, who, being of the Reformed faith, was almost a heathen; he was doubly frightened when Herr von Fuchs announced a new regulation touching the churches. The evangelical clergy had not yet gotten over the forbidding, a few years ago, of the white surplices which reminded the Elector of the Papists. Now His Serenity had perceived, to his great vexation, that the parsons were kept from the studies proper to their office by having to live from the land. Hence the fields of the manses were to be sequestered and the parsons to receive wages instead. Surprise and horror took hold of the parson of Malchow, and with uplifted hands he besought that things be left as they were. In all his life he had seen but little money and his imagination could not grasp the regular payment of a wage. All he could understand was that his land was going to be taken from him.

Great Samuel Puffendorf, said Herr von Fuchs to himself when the minister had departed, how well you have described

the character of Lutheranism! No other religion creates so many honest fools, none is better suited for the subjects of a monarch and hence so useful to the German princes, whereas Calvin has accustomed the people to having its voice heard and hence promoted the growth of democracy. It is very well arranged in our state. The sovereign and all in commanding positions are Calvinists, the people are Lutherans. Herr von Fuchs had long been making efforts to have Puffendorf, who had liberated both law and reason from theological padding, to be called to Berlin, instead of working in the archives of Stockholm. If the eminent scholar was happy only when buried in documents, he might as well dig into the archives of Berlin and write a history of the great Frederic William. Fuchs made up his mind to propose that very seriously to the Elector. The literary fame of the capital needed to be raised. One Puffendorf was worth a whole academy.

Eleven was approaching. In an hour the guests from the city would arrive. His table always worried him. His cook, who was good, had come out, but there was lacking a butler and the lackeys were but oafs. His Berlin dinners were much esteemed, but that was on account of their informality and their atmosphere of good humor. The most distinguished people turned up their noses. They considered the tone at the Minister's to be mediocre and his company even worse. This had been loudly proclaimed by Madame Field-Marshal von Grumbkow, the Egeria of Herr von Meinders and of the entire French party. She and her vain husband were bursting with the pride of blood. Lately she had said in the antechamber of Her Serenity, the worst thing about the Berlin court was that there was no advancement for the well born; all high positions were given to the vulgar; her friend Meinders,

that high aristocrat from Bielefeld, had stood within two paces of her.

Fuchs called the lackey back and gave additional directions. He needed not to pay especial attention to any of his guests except the Hanoverian Minister Grote. In view of the origin of the Crown-Princess, Grote might become important at any time. Fuchs had often blamed himself for not paying sufficient attention to the young court at Köpenick which might shortly become all important.

There was a heap of papers on his desk. He smiled ironically to himself. There was the harmless public treaty with Austria which could easily be shown in spite of the return of the territory of Schwiebus. The real alliance must be hidden if a war with France was to be avoided. Rébenac had been well fooled and Fridag showed himself an excellent ambassador.

A French pamphlet slipped out from among the documents: "*L'Europe esclave, si l'Angleterre ne rompt ses fers.*" He had read it before. His features changed and became almost handsome as his eyes dreamed over the pamphlet. "Europe enslaved unless England breaks her chains!" The author could have been no common scribbler. The argument was addressed to the Catholics; they were not to fear for their religion even though in order to kill the snake of Versailles half of the Catholic world were to fight in the Protestant cause. Fuchs jumped up under the spell of his idea. It had been well understood by the old Elector, who was sitting even now in his garden in Potsdam wrapped in his furs, with his gouty legs in heavy bandages. But alas it was another labor of Hercules to pin down the stubborn, suspicious, morose despot who was weary and enraged over the eternal treachery of fate. Yet last summer Fuchs had persuaded him to send a messenger

to Holland and gently to begin the great work. But would the cold-blooded, calculating Prince of Orange, who could not even love a woman, risk the great adventure in England? Will not the priests dissuade the Emperor from making common cause with the heretics? The Elector was to meet the Prince of Orange at Kleve: he hesitated to leave his cave. Fuchs determined to make him go. He himself was now forty-six. Where would he be in ten years? There was place in the world for another Richelieu of a new kind. Aye, young Altorf might be hired to translate the pamphlet and the Hamburg printers might be bribed to announce it in their news-letter.

The first guest to arrive was the Secretary Ilgen, who, keeping no carriage of his own, had had to be sent for. He brought new documents to exchange for the old and was ready to receive instructions. A careful, youngish man hoping to be Minister himself some day, watchful of every word, preferring to let others talk. The carriage brought people of a different stripe: the elegant and handsome chevalier, the darling of all Berlin, and the signora whom he proclaimed a genius of the art of song. These were immediately followed by the Hanoverian envoy extraordinary, Von Grote.

The signora, who was to pass the night here, retired to her room in order to have her maid attend to her coiffure. A lively conversation arose among the men, although Herr von Grote immediately recognized the Chevalier von Kolbe and regretted, as often before, the mixed company tolerated by the Elector. His own master, the Duke of Hanover, was the first gentleman of all Germany.

Herr von Fuchs gave his arm to the dark signora, who had re-entered with a mincing grace. She was a pretty, black-eyed lady, no longer young but full of soft, inviting curves. Everybody called her signora although she was a German by the

name of Paulina Piffel and daughter of a Salzburg barber. But there were so few German singers that one assumed all to be Italian. Until recently the signora had been with the opera of Weissenfels which the duke, an enthusiastic lover of music, supported nobly with the taxes wrung from a starving peasantry. The signora had been driven forth by a shameful cabal which had shaken the Duchy of Sachsen-Weissenfels to its foundations.

The meal was excellent, although it consisted of but eight courses. There was a wine soup, a roasted saddle of deer, a boiled carp, a stuffed breast of lamb with red cabbage, a roasted suckling pig, crabs from the Oder River, a French cock, and plum tarts. Fuchs was delighted to have so excellent a cook because both Herr von Grote and Herr von Kolbe were fastidious and experienced eaters. The Hanoverian Minister had visited most of the courts of Europe in the service of his master. Thoroughly, but without tiring his hearers, with an exquisite old-fashioned ease he explained how this same French cock would be prepared in Paris and by the King of Sweden's cook and at the house of the mad Count Isenburg. He ended, of course, by the assurance that only here and to-day had he discovered the marvelous savor of which this fowl was capable. The compliments of the chevalier were not so subtle but extremely easy and agreeable. They made Fuchs reflect that amusing people were very rare in Brandenburg, where everyone was eaten up with ambition. This chevalier, said to be from Metz, had pleased the morose old Elector on his first visit several years ago. Business had then taken him to the Palatinate. Now he was free and in search of service.

The signora drank glass after glass. Fuchs saw to it that she was not left thirsty. The gentlemen exchanged glances. Her tongue was loosened.

"Isn't it true, Signora, that the high notes cannot be nearly as well taken by a cantatrice as by messieurs whose lower register has been extirpated?"

"Pas le moins du monde! Your Excellency just don't understand. In Weissenfels the duke once made what you might call a test, *comprenez-vous?* So we gived a kind of an opery with a matter o' four wenches. The first was a page, a baby of ten; the second sang high like a capon; the third was a right regular castrated dago. The fourth was me. *Et c'est à moi, qu'on à donné le prix!*"

Paulina Piffel had never made much progress in her native tongue. Her French was worth hearing, and she made it heard, too. She had learned it from a comedian and adventurer of Nancy, with whom she had once upon a time run away from home. The rogue had afterward sold her to a Bavarian count.

"In Hanover," said Grote, "my gracious master and mistress permit no language to be sung except the Italian. The attempt to sing German is vulgar and mischievous. Our language has neither the ease nor the melody nor the grace."

"Your Excellency hadn't ought never to say that! Because what are us poor wenches to do? Every place is now taken by those dago beasts."

Paulina was indignant. When the magnificent new opera had recently been opened in Dresden she had applied for a position in vain because the Saxon Elector was likewise a friend of Italian singing. It was in Dresden that she had met Kolbe, who had brought her thence to Berlin. Kolbe was never without a woman. One could enjoy her and then, when one no longer did, pass her on to some one else. One might gain a patron in this manner.

They discussed the warlike and musical Saxon Elector. Not long ago, according to Paulina Piffel, he had simply caused

the beautiful singer, Margherita Salicola, who had all Venice at her feet and was the Duke of Mantua's mistress, to be kidnapped. It was during the carnival! A frightful scandal. The little whore had been willing, of course. The Mantuan had flown into a rage and sent a challenge to Saxony, but there had been no duel. Now the Salicola ruled both the opera and the Elector at Dresden, and the Elector's wife had actually to return the Italian's curtsy.

"*Ah, ces hommes!* If an' I was in Her Serenity's place I'd turn my behind out to the whore when she curtsied to me in my box. *Cet Électeur de Saxe est un vaurien.* Won't have no one around him but dago wenches an' dago eunuchs. The Lutheran swine!"

The faces under the four noble periwigs were convulsed with merriment. Paulina became aware of her mistake. "*Ah, mon Dieu, suis-je sotte!*" She threw a piece of sweetmeat at the laughing chevalier's head. He caught it in his mouth and began very skillfully to juggle oranges high in the air. Everybody watched him. Herr von Grote remarked that nowadays there was too little *drôlerie* at table. He could remember some very merry moments in his youth, even in the presence of well-born ladies. Gentlemen among themselves had been rather insufferable, of course. And in the inns among the vulgar the customs had been swinish. At a festivity in Regensburg, where the guests were all imperial envoys, long needles had been stuck into the behind of everyone who had raised his wine-glass. During dessert the guests had been asked to put their hands into a covered dish; they had withdrawn them red with swine's blood. The recent spread of foreign manners had somewhat softened the honest old German customs.

They all took coffee except Grote, who had never been able to get used to this new-fangled Arabic drug, nor to tea or

chocolate. Since the dining-room had been well heated in spite of the May weather, they had all grown hot during the meal and were now enjoying the air that streamed through an open glass door into the garden-room. For a moment Fuchs considered ordering pipes and tobacco, since the aromatic smoke after a heavy meal tends to soothe the brain inflamed by wine and is said also to have a good influence on the viscera. But the singer could not bear smoke. They were curious—these theatrical canaries. First they would chatter like wenches who haunt the streets of an evening, and then suddenly they would play the lady. In the next moment Paulina Piffel returned to her natural self. Slightly drunk, she lay in an armchair with her legs stretched far out, and threw kisses passionately at the extremely reserved and decent Ilgen, who, being in the presence of his official superiors, was violently embarrassed. Next the chevalier sat down at the clavichord and began to improvise. He had never had lessons, but what could a Kolbe not do? The delicate tone of the instrument seemed to the well-fed company like the chirping of a cricket in a cage. This was too much for the signora. She sprang up and assumed a dramatic posture. Kolbe was to give her the pitch. She herself could not distinguish between one note and another. Whatever she sang had to be drummed into her by a singing-master. She sang an aria from a new German comic opera. Touching the keys lightly, the chevalier accompanied her.

"These lovelorn monkeys I'd not purchase
At a brass farthing for the score!
For now 'tis Milly that they ogle,
And how 'tis Kitty they adore.
Then 'tis, My dainty one, my sweet,
My little duck, my lambkin fleet!
Nay, not a farthing for the score!"

With a humorous portamento which caused the singing little voices of the keys to run through the whole gamut from treble to bass, the chevalier closed his accompaniment.

At this point the Hanoverian Minister, who had business in the city, took his leave. Upon a courteous question from his host he at once invited the Secretary Ilgen to share his carriage. It was only now that Fuchs had some conversation with Kolbe. They touched on politics, too. The signora sat quite still and gradually drifted into gentle slumber. Kolbe showed that he was more than just an ex-chamberlain of the Palatinate. He displayed a good understanding and much experience of men and affairs at the courts of the tiny South German principalities. There was no high style in his conversation, but fluency and wit, and the Brandenburg Minister heard much that was new to him. He thought again that such men could be made useful here. It was too late to influence the present sovereign. One must begin betimes to work on his successor. He asked Kolbe whether he knew the Crown-Prince. Very well. His Highness had already invited the chevalier to spend some days at Köpenick.

Refreshed, the lovely Paulina opened her black eyes and with a soulful smile regarded each of the two gentlemen, who first smiled back at her and then understandingly at one another. Then Kolbe arose to take his leave. "Your Excellency," said he, "it suddenly occurs to me that I neglected to refuse an invitation of the wife of General von Schöning for this evening. I am invited to take a hand at cards with Madame la Maréchale von Grumbkow and the Privy-Councilor von Meinders, and I should be guilty of a gross breach of courtesy if I were to stay away without an excuse. Will you forgive me, and you, too, loveliest of warblers? You know that I am your slave. But my carriage will still take me into the gate

before it closes." He kissed her hand and left with an elegant gesture.

The signora walked with Fuchs in his garden with the little lake. She admitted that she was pleased and soothed to be on the estate of a distinguished gentleman. No one need tell a woman what kind of a man she is dealing with. Kolbe was an excellent fellow, cheerful and entertaining and ready to please, but with little of solid worth. He would take three hours to complete his toilette in the morning and ogle at himself in the mirror like a woman. At bottom Paulina Piffel cared not for such triflers, having been seriously brought up.

She had this agreeable quality, that one had not to put oneself out to entertain her; she talked quite enough. The Minister considered that he hadn't really desired this situation. Kolbe had created it by running away. Of course the servants would tell his wife that the singer had spent the night on the estate. But Madame von Fuchs had long been obliged to accustom herself to her husband's peculiarities. Strange that he was always offered the dark and plump when his personal taste was for the blond and slender! Hadn't he lost several years courting Madame Besser, the wife of that unbearable poetaster? Ah, if one were only ten or twelve years younger! She had conquered his heart at once when the couple had come to Berlin. But this lady from Leipzig, who was slender as Artemis, had the amusing caprice of remaining faithful to her beggarly wind-bag of a husband. All Berlin knew of Fuch's unrequited passion and he was much ridiculed. The Besser couple were now at Köpenick. That had been the doing of his friend Danckelmann, that leathery pedant who had the hope of being Minister. No doubt people laughed at him. Let them, the clucking fowl, until he wrung their necks! Meanwhile this dark woman wouldn't be so bad.

"It grows cool, beautiful Paulina. Shall we return?"

"Whatever pleases Your Excellency."

"And will you permit me to cross the threshold of your room in order to assure myself that everything conceivable is being done for your comfort?"

She looked at him with a veiled look which was not at all unamiable. "*Ah, les hommes!*" she said with a gentle sigh, and took his arm.

★(8)★

MATTHIAS KNUTSEN and the old soldier Frieder were held prisoners in the gaol on Kloster Street. The mounted gendarmes had taken the old man, who could scarcely move for lameness, because he was the companion of the atheist and rebel. The quacksalver had played the part of informant. First for a week Knutsen and the old man had been detained at a village near Jüterbog in a filthy hole dug four yards deep into the earth and closed by a trap-door above. When they had been taken out to be transported to the city with rogues and thieves, Frieder was dying. They had now been four days in the Berlin gaol and Knutsen had not yet been examined. He questioned the turnkey and got as reply a curse and a blow; a lousy rebel like that had better hold his tongue! A Bohemian in the same cell consoled him. The gentleman had better not be impatient; once he swung from the gallows he would have peace all the long summer through.

Six prisoners crouched in the dark hole lit only by one small high window. Day and night the stench was terrible, since the pail of ordure was carried out only every other day. Loudest among them was a gray-haired thief, one of whose ears had been cropped close to the skull. He hailed from the shores of the Neckar and knew all the prisons between Amsterdam and Vienna. The Bohemian was an old expert, too, but far slyer than the Suabian braggart. The slyest of them

all was a shepherd from Holstein who always laughed boisterously, talked little, and feigned great respect for the two old rogues. This fellow was suspected of complicity in a murder near Hamburg. But at Spandau he had been caught stealing horses. The senate of Hamburg demanded his extradition, but Berlin did not like to give up a convicted thief. Four months he had been here and had not yet been put to the torture; he feigned stupidity and threw out hints and dragged on the correspondence with Hamburg. The fourth prisoner was a cloth-maker's journeyman whom the constables had arrested after a stabbing bout in a bawdy-house. He was as innocent as a little mouse and the judges had ordered his release. But the turnkeys knew that he had money sewn into his doublet and wanted bribes. He wept and prayed all day. From the first moment on the two old rogues hated Knutsen because they saw at once that he was no common criminal. When they heard the turnkey speak of rebellion they pricked their ears, having themselves a vast respect for their betters. Loudly they abused old Frieder, who lay there breathing stertorously. They would not give the sick man one of the two plank beds. He lay on shavings and rotten straw; Knutsen had thrown his brown mantle over him.

The rogues' favorite subject of conversation was successful robberies, burglaries and murders. They pretended to have heard concerning these from friends. But they had seen many executions and were experts in matters pertaining to torture, such as flogging, branding, and the cutting off of fingers. So detailed was the learning of the Suabian in this matter that he was finally discovered to have served a flayer, which hurt his repute in the cell. He had pretended to be a fencing-master. He pretended that he had lost his ear in battle, but everyone was convinced that a hangman had cut it off and nailed it to

the gallows. This morning the Suabian regaled the company with the misfortune that had struck him when the French had plundered Seligenstadt. He had come too late; the Jews had already been robbed of all their money. In his righteous wrath he had helped break into the Jews' houses and torment the miscreants. They had pierced a Jew's ear with a thick long wire the other end of which had been thrust into flames. The wire grew red-hot and the Jew, maddened with pain, had cut off his own ear. Another's long red beard they had clamped tight under a chest's lid and then had lashed his back with leathern whips until he cried bloody murder. He tugged in his despair, but preferred to have his whole beard torn out rather than give a farthing to an honest Christian. Thus the Jews cheated the soldiers. The Bohemian pointed at Knutsen with his thumb.

"Talk not so loud, brother! We've got fine people here with tender ears. Rabble like thee and me might better hold their tongues! When they've done away with Electors and with the Emperor, how'lt thou fare, old ass's head?"

"Hell and damnation, brother! My behind is not a rebel's. Empire and princes have one true friend in this dung-hole!"

"The wonder is that the lice and bedbugs don't respect the quality more. I see that the gentleman over there scratches himself mightily. But the captain on the straw scratches not. The wise little beasts smell the death-sweat."

"I wager he'll live another week. Aye, I'd bet a thaler if I had one."

"Make the Zwickau lad lend thee one and me another and I'll win both. Why should he spend all of his money on whores?"

They all fell silent because the turnkey came in. The man took Knutsen, who was watching the feeble breath of Frieder,

by the shoulder and bade him rise. He led him over stairs and down passages and thrust him suddenly through an open door into the street. Knutsen was confused. Then he beheld some one wrapped in a black coat beckoning him to follow swiftly. He obeyed, and soon approached one of the city gates. Here were peasants and carters, and folk came and went under the arch of the gate. Between two wagons loaded high with grain the man in black permitted Knutsen to catch up with him.

"Speak softly, Matthias! Do you not know me?"

"No, sir!"

"I am your old pupil, Thomas Altorf. Say nothing! Follow the peasants slowly through the gate and wait for me."

Unquestioned by the watch, Knutsen passed through the Spandau gate. He waited under a group of trees until Altorf joined him unobtrusively. The two old friends shook hands.

"You have neither hat nor cloak and your coat, which I know from of old, is full of straw and dirt. Take my cloak, that the prison marks be not seen on you, and buy a cap on the road."

"I must go back. An old man lies dying in the cell. I was confused and forgetful. He needs me."

"Are you mad? I bribed the keepers and it would go ill with me were it discovered. Nor would the court deal lightly with you in view of your attacks on Church and State. Come quickly."

"Poor old Frieder! I was the only one who gave him a kind word during all his dog's life."

"Whether he die today or tomorrow, you can help him no more and he will not feel their torments."

"True. Then may thy God help thee, Frieder!"

"You did not recognize me? I was but a lad in those days."

"It is many years ago. You have become a fine gentleman with handsome garments. But I grow old, my lad, and am still a vagabond. 'Tis no light matter to preach reason to the Germans."

"And the church of the Conscience-People?"

"Exists and increases daily. But the people do not know one another and thus do not constitute a mass, and so the darkness has the upper hand, the wicked old enemy, as Luther said, who was himself not the least wicked. But what are you doing in Berlin?"

"I serve in the Elector's chancellery."

"The devil! You have risen in the world. That's better, to be sure, than tramping the roads as a Knight of Reason!"

"Where were you all these years? Thrice did I write to your old inn in Nürnberg."

"The loyal old innkeeper is long dead and the letters must have been lost. From four universities was I expelled. Being a schoolmaster has been my best trade until each time a parson smoked me out. I've helped printers with their news-letters; many of them read script but ill, and will hire one who can read it. For years I've been hawking calendars and broadsides from market-place to market-place. When I meet a man of sense I show him my own writings."

"Have these been found and brought here, too?"

"No, for I smelled a rat and hid my books in the house of an honest publican. I wandered about in the wagon of a damned quacksalver, who betrayed me in the end."

"I knew you were not far. I met a gentleman who heard you speak in a barn at Treuenbrietzen. 'Tis well that they have nothing in print over your name."

They wandered along the bank of the river, on the other side of which lay the Electoral gardens. They crossed in a

fisherman's boat. Through forest and meadows they reached the village of Steglitz. A public-house was there, but the publican had nought but thin beer and a loaf of rye bread. Knutsen, however, broke the bread into the sour beer and seemed content. The little thin brown man, just released from prison, sat under a tree amid the pigs and chickens and discoursed of the triumph of the empire of reason.

"Thomas, do you remember when we lived at the Yellow Angel in Jena and threw my incendiary pamphlets into the professors' houses and the parsons' churches? You were but seventeen and the most impassioned heretic I had met, worthy of your ancestor the grand old Faustus Socinus. How is it now? You seem to have surpassed your old teacher. I am still only an unbeliever, but you are a philosopher?"

"I have drunk from many a beaker since. In Holland and England are men who think as freely as you, but who act otherwise. The world will never yield to your methods."

"And I tell you that your learned gentlemen are but traitors to their consciences. They know the truth, but it seems bitter to them, and so they sugar-coat its pills in their Latin kitchens. Truth must be devoured whole."

"Are you still hoping to make the rabble wise? One prince's word weighs more with the vulgar than the crying of a hundred thousand poor devils. 'Tis the high ones who rule."

"Is that your wisdom? 'Tis also that of the Jesuits and confessors. I would all princes were hanged to yon linden tree. I would that you had more faith, Thomas! Happy are they who do not see and yet believe. I was a little child when a man came running into my father's room and cried out that in London the people had cut off the king's head. A new breath goeth through the world! Do you not feel it?"

"You must be upon your way to safety. Take this purse!"

"You give me all that? I've never seen so much money! You have grown rich, Thomas."

"Chance played a certain sum into my hands. But a part of this money is sent to you by another. That gentleman is a philosopher, and a maker of Latin pills, too, but he would not have the blood of a confessor of reason spilled."

"Would they take my life?"

"If it were sworn that you said all princes should be deposed, the Elector would be without mercy. And even though they hanged you not, they would send you for life to drag stones at Peitz with your foot chained to your barrow."

"How will you fare when 'tis found that I'm gone?"

"There's one in that cell who should rightly be set free; the turnkey will say he had meant to fetch that one and summoned you by mistake."

"Aye, that devout fool from Zwickau. But suppose the gaoler betray you despite the bribe?"

"He will lie out of it. Prisoners have escaped before. Was I to let you die?"

"You should come with me, Thomas! Let us go to Holland and write good books. You would help me to leave my vagrant's life. Nor will you grow great in this land. Courts and councils are no place for a fellow who helps an old friend break prison. Have you a wife, Thomas?"

"I have none and yet have one. She is my woman and another's wife."

"Who cares for that? Flee with her and rejoice in your life! Behind bushes on the heath or in the marriage-bed 'tis the same in the sight of the great god Pan."

"You must proceed upon this road to Potsdam, Matthias. Avoid the castle. The Elector is in residence and all strangers

are stopped. Ask if a boat is going downstream. If not, run as far as you can and seek a lodging for the night. Say you are a schoolmaster promised a place near Lippe, whither you are going. Do not preach till you are out of danger. When once you are safe in Lüneburg, write me to the house of the Privy-Secretary Stosch. If the people of the post break open the letter there must be no danger in what they read. Write not your name. And now farewell!"

"Will you not appoint a place where I may await you?"

"Wait not!"

"Then farewell, Thomas! But do not doubt but that reason will triumph!"

★(9)★

THE night, they say, is no man's friend. The author of this saying must have been a fool. For the night is the friend of them whom the day wounds. He who has seen the slothful dawn end a thousand sleepless nights is no longer pleased with the day. More healing is the dark that shadows open eyes. Surely God said: let there be light! But when one is old and ill 'tis better to gaze into the night than into the day. All is silence and there are no people to peer at one: Is he vexed today? How long will the old man last? Is he in a mood for beggars? In the night they must give one peace.

Old Frederic William did not stir in his bed; he would not have his tossing wake his old valet Kornmesser, who had fallen asleep in his chair. He had ordered the candle to be placed near the farther wall so that its feeble light might not annoy him. The pain was not so severe; he had suffered worse. But how was he to find sleep? If he had been able to go a-riding or a-hunting as of old! Drinking would put one to sleep, too, but liquor had never been to his taste. The physicians were ignorant donkeys. Beyond their eternal enemas and phlebotomies they knew nothing. If he himself had had any time left he might have hit upon some remedy for the gout. What had he not tried, beginning with the swallows' nests recommended by the Elector of Mayence. Boiled in milk and applied to the hurt spots they were to

expel the pain utterly; they effected nothing. Nor did any of the many mixtures. Was there any use in swilling down tea according to the advice of the Dutchman Bontkoe? He had poured down between thirty and forty cupfuls of a morning. 'Twas just possible that the plentiful urination drained the blood of turbid elements. Since the Dutch doctor's death he had given up the excessive drinking of tea; his body physicians were opposed to it. The Doctors Weise and Marholtz fought their war against the gout by means of a masterly inactivity; they depended upon patience and flannel bandages.

Kornmesser was snoring again. Curious that a sovereign must lie there and be annoyed by his servant's snoring. He wondered whether Louis at Versailles would endure such a thing. The Emperor Leopold in Vienna would certainly not. What would become of Spanish etiquette? Here they simply didn't care. All his life had he been unfairly treated. Once or twice he had vigorously hit back at the world and thus gained peace. When he was dead his loss would be felt. How did Kornmesser dare to snore like that? The fellow knew himself to be indispensable and so grew bold. There was no one else to nurse the Elector. Neither Meinders nor Grumbkow nor Fuchs rubbed his sore foot. The Dutch valet had a way of gently stroking the sore places that brought a little relief; he brought help at the worst hours when the Elector could not endure even his wife's presence. At such times his joints would be so full of stitches and pains as to drive him mad; the covers would be like lead and a tread on the floor was enough to make him desperate. Then these pains would send evil vapors to his head that caused irritation and wild rages. Afterward he would be vexed at himself. These worst hours Kornmesser witnessed and endured, as when, for instance, the

year before in Potsdam he had been able to see no one for days and people had rumored that the old man had gone mad.

It came over him that the inevitable journey to Kleve could not be put off longer than another week. He had determined this step and rejected it again. Yesterday, however, Lord Leven had returned with a secret message from Prince William and received a definite promise. The Prince refused to commit himself in writing, but sent word of mouth through a trusted messenger. People of such loyalty and devotion as the taciturn young Scotchman, the Elector reflected, did not grow on his soil. Nothing but sluggards. But what a terrible burden his nephew of Orange was imposing on him! To be sure, the time was a serious one and the great design upon England must be discussed. If only he were younger! But one had, somehow, to combine against Louis of France. For the Emperor Leopold, that solemn fool with his confessors and court dwarfs, was certainly no match for the Frenchman. Nor was William of Orange a strong and virile personality, rather a sly, calculating fellow who wanted no one to draw an advantage. It was Fuchs who was always urging upon him this journey; the man probably profited thereby. Thieves—all of them! Servitors and thieves, 'twas the same thing. Dorothea gave him no peace, either. She wanted to go to Kleve, dreaming that William would make her son Philip his successor in Holland. The Crown-Prince, on the other hand, was opposed to the scheme because he had not been invited and grudged his young stepbrother the Dutch succession. If only they would all leave him in peace! Tomorrow he would have to receive Rébenac and would have to lie and pretend that he was Louis' loyal friend. And of all one's labors the result was ingratitude. He should have taken more pleasure

out of life and celebrated feasts and given himself over to wine and wenches, like so many of the German princes. Now all his structure was tumbling down, anyhow. His heir Frederic—merciful God!

He didn't blame his poor wife for thinking day and night of her children. Four sons and two daughters. 'Twas well that the others who had been born had died in their diapers. But she had given birth annually until not so long ago. She was a man's woman, always in her husband's bed, even in the field of war. True, she had nursed him, nor would he in his widowerhood have found a better. He had carefully considered everything at the time. Ah, she wasn't as distinguished and wise as his first wife! How many years had his poor Louise Henriette been dead now? How had she looked? He could barely remember. She had been a lady admirably educated in Holland and clever enough to be consulted in affairs of state. He had been devoted to her and she had borne him three sons. Had it been that passionate love concerning which old Ovid wrote? Perhaps in high princely circles such love is not possible as it is among ordinary people. Mistresses served one ill, too. But the Elector had never been prone to such things; he had lacked even the time. Once he had felt the urge of true passion. Ah, that had been fifty years ago in the happy years of his youth in Holland. The object of his flame had been the Palatinate Lady Louise, daughter of the outlawed King of Bohemia and of an English princess. How lovely and radiant she had been with that proud blood of the Stuarts in her! They had sent her to the French court and had made of her a Catholic and an abbess. She had become a frightful whore and given birth to ten bastards. Now she was an old woman walking alone in her convent garden. They said that

she could bear people no more and insisted on having deaf-and-dumb nuns about her, so that there might be silence. She'd be a fit companion for him now!

A senile self-pity came over the Elector. He never yielded to that by day. Fate was a witch! Once or twice one could subdue her with a club. She ended by spitting even upon the gifts she granted. By two wives he had had seven sons, each handsomer and more gallant than the other except that one misshapen in body and soul, and that one was his heir! What a handsome fellow the Prince Karl Emile, Louise Henriette's oldest boy, had been! What a likely fellow her youngest, the Margrave Ludwig was! and Dorothea's four lads! Ah, 'twas the swift death of Karl Emile that had first brought upon him this great heaviness of soul. Early one morning during the Alsatian campaign there had been a knocking at the door. The Elector and Dorothea had still been in bed. A messenger from Strassburg had entered and announced that his oldest son was dead. They had put poison into his food, so much was clear; it must have been the damned French, but the criminal was never found. A rumor had sprung up among the soldiers that the stepmother had done the deed, and ever since poisonous tongues had whispered about Dorothea at every family mishap. Loathsome even to have to protect her against such slanders. Doubtless she had no great love for her stepsons. But who could love the hunchbacked Crown-Prince? He was good for nothing but to arrange ceremonies and collect coins. Slothful and sickly, he would be neither warrior nor ruler. The State would disintegrate in his hands. No harm, then, in cutting off a few principalities for Dorothea's sons.

The melancholy old man raised his heavy head a little.

Verses by his beloved Ovid, his life-long friend, came into his mind:

*Est deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo
Impetus hic sacrae semina mentis habet.*¹

'Tis a fine thing to know by heart the verses of a great poet. Poets, to be sure, are but liars. Yet for a moment verses like that are like fresh water. The great impulse was not dead in him yet. Truly he had wanted to make something heroic of his life, had nourished thoughts of a king's crown and had reckoned himself of one company with Alexander and Cæsar. King of all the Baltic lands he would once have desired to be; that would have been a realm! When he was a youngster he once thought of traveling in disguise to Stockholm to woo the Queen Christine, like a knight of King Arthur's table. Then with the Polish crown upon his head great things might have been done! Instead it had been his portion to be and to remain Elector of Brandenburg and to quarrel with the representatives of Brandenburg and Kleve and Prussia over taxes on beer and other things. Finally, to keep the little he had, he had had to deliver himself tied hand and foot to France. He had been called traitor and Judas and had had to send his embittered congratulations five years ago when Strassburg had been stolen from Germany. And what thanks had he received? King Louis had consented to let him exist; not even Stettin, which he had honestly conquered, was given him. He would pay the French King out! Here on his bed of sickness he would form the alliance that would undermine the French colossus. Ah, were he but younger! And if only great things could be willed greatly! Everything drags and

¹ There is a God within us and we burn under his stirring;
This impulse has in it the seeds of the sacred soul.

drags. But let them beware; there was still life in his old carcass!

"Hey, there, Kornmesser, thou hast slept long enough! Turn me on my right side! My back is sore from lying."

Kornmesser, a small gray-haired man, sprang up swiftly. The dawn was shimmering. The Elector, flat on his back, had turned his head. His great birdlike eyes were fixed on his servant and the enormous hook of his fleshy nose lay on the pillow like the beak of a fantastic vulture. The head was set rudely upon the huge torso; from under the powerful chin protruded a colossal double chin that hid the throat. Kornmesser lifted the light, warm fur coverlet, a gift of the Moscow Tsar, and the huge sick man lay there helpless. The Elector put his left arm about his old servant and his position was gently shifted. Now the impatient old gentleman was satisfied for a time as Kornmesser slowly massaged the swollen leg. These were the moments on account of which the old Dutchman received so much money from the foreign ambassadors. For under his gentle hands Frederic William discussed all things and the servant could communicate the most favorable as well as the harshest opinions of people, if he would just go on stroking and chatting. For years he took money from the generous Rébenac. At last the Viennese woke up, too. The active Fridag had honored him with a gift of three thousand gulden on his arrival; recently during the negotiations between Brandenburg and Austria two thousand more had been added. Kornmesser had been a rich man for years, owning houses and gardens in Berlin.

"Rub not so hard! Who was that new lackey that waited at table yesterday?"

"He's from the household of his Highness Ludwig. Heide-

kamm had him fetched in place of Kaspar, who fell down the stairs drunk and broke his neck."

The Elector, accustomed to speak to everyone in his own tongue, used to converse in Dutch with Kornmesser. That was too much of an exertion now. He had to bear with the man's mixed jargon of German and Dutch.

"Heidekamm should have consulted me. That new fellow is no good at table. Put him in the antechamber!"

"That Heidekamm does as he likes."

"Let him! He is cleverer than thou and richer, too. Ye're all thieves. Are the liveries for the journey ready?"

"The coachmans' and drummers' red coats aren't ready yet."

"Hurry then! Am I to stay home because my servants are lazy? I must start in a week."

"But Your Grace commanded that the journey must be kept secret, so nobody told the tailors to hurry."

"Everything is to be ready within a week. But there's to be no tongue wagging. Her Serenity and myself will simply get into the carriage and be gone."

"There are sixty coaches that go along, thirty in front and thirty to trek behind. If Your Grace is going to start in a week and desires to be comfortable, there's not a minute to lose."

"Give the order that everything be ready a week from Wednesday. The following Sunday I must rest at Magdeburg."

"Now I could be earning handsome money if I wanted to. The French ambassador would pay well for a report of Your Grace's journey."

"Kornmesser, careful with that great toe! Not so rough, donkey! It must be swollen again."

"Aye, 'tis red and thick. That Rébenac must have good helpers here in the castle. He's a sly one getting all the news."

"He used to be thy favorite. Hast received no tips?"

"I go to no foreigner for tips. I'll tell Your Grace freely: I hate the French for the way they treat the poor Huguenots. I'm an old Calvinist Christian man."

"Thou art right. I too feel it deeply. Eighty families of fugitives have arrived again. I would see the men later."

"If only Your Grace could mount a horse as at the battle of Fehrbellin and treat the French according to their deserts!"

"Time will bring council. My son will accomplish it."

"Night before last banqueting at Herr Fuchs's house the Crown-Prince conversed for an hour with the imperial ambassador."

"With whom else?"

"A long time with Herr Kolbe, who is a great friend of Fuchs's, too. Herr Fuchs is now the protector of the singer whom Herr Kolbe brought."

"Fuchs can't keep his hands off the wenches. My Ministers must have time to waste."

"His wife's going to run away some day. But Herr Fuchs is the best man Your Grace has. He keeps thinking about the affairs of state."

"He thinks he's the cleverest, too!"

"They're all counters in Your Grace's game. But it's good to have them think that they do it all themselves."

"Aha? Where didst thou learn that? Stop now. I must get up. It's daylight. There, take me under the knees and pull me around slowly!"

When Frederic William was seated on the edge of the bed and had donned his day shirt, Kornmesser helped him put on hose and cloth breeches and brought forth the short fur-

lined boots. The sick man could walk in these, whereas in elegant shoes he had often to be carried in a chair. After his face had been washed, he put on a simple coat of brown velvet that came to his knees and sent Kornmesser out to demand his breakfast. It was before six o'clock and the chamberlain had not arrived. On this day the Elector ordered coffee. For the greater part of his life he had started the day with beer soup. But during the last few years, following the new-fangled customs, tea or coffee had been served for breakfast at the Berlin court. After his coffee he sent out both Kornmesser and the lackey who had served. Then he took his old prayer-book from the window seat and said the Lord's Prayer with gently moving lips as he had been wont to do these sixty years. Praying was no occupation for him, but without that brief devotion he would have felt as though he had not washed. Also it seemed to him as though God came nearer in one's old age. When the night was not too bad nor the first news of the day too vexatious, a feeling of piety would come over him on a lovely summer morning like this. But even at this devout moment he would not have given up a square foot of land and would have ordered a soldier who had deserted for the second time hanged without mercy.

At the end of fifteen minutes Kornmesser returned to comb his master's sparse gray hair. Whenever possible the Elector delayed putting on his periwig. He had never gotten quite used to the damned French invention. He asked whose turn it was this morning.

"'Tis the turn of Secretary Stosch."

Frederic William thought that he could take his ease in front of his godchild, the son of his old court preacher Bartholomew Stosch. Had it been the turn of the elegant, chilly Ilgen he would have put on his wig. Kornmesser put

around his neck the big silk kerchief and tucked the two ends into his master's coat. Sitting thus the Elector seemed more some honest burgher and householder than the third sovereign in Europe, at whose command forty thousand well-armed severely drilled troops would spring at the throat of any that he pointed out.

A chamberlain had been waiting in the adjoining study. He now announced that Her Serenity had gotten up and was being dressed. Her oldest son, the seventeen-year-old Margrave Philip, had already gone a-riding. Otherwise there was no news in the house. On the study table the Elector found a great bunch of flowers, such as he loved. He began to open the letters that had been brought hither to Potsdam. There were not many. In old times in Berlin he had himself opened the entire official correspondence and distributed it among his councilors. The volume of affairs had so increased that this method was no longer possible. But he still liked to open letters, whenever it was seemly. He never wholly trusted his officials and they would not dare destroy what he himself had read. Hold! Here was a petition of the evangelical clergy of Berlin addressed to him personally and dealing with the flight of a dangerous enemy of religion and order from the prison of the Berlin court. The pious Pastor Heintzelmann's name was signed. He could not pass that over. He would have to investigate.

At eight o'clock the confidential secretary was announced.

"Come in, Stosch! Thou art late. When didst thou leave the gate?"

"At six, Your Serenity. Before that I had to go to the chancellery to fetch the documents for your signature."

"A young fellow of forty, like thyself, could start at five. When thou wert born my chancellery was up and alive at

four. Thy father, too, was in his study at that hour; I often saw his light when I rode forth to the hunt."

After the copies he read the new-letters. He gave precise directions, prescribing the turns of phrase that were to be used. Several matters he put off till the morrow to discuss with Fuchs. He thought so rapidly that the secretary was hard put to it to take notes. Long experience enabled him to perceive at once the errors of his officials. He was sorry that he could not attend to everything personally.

"What trash hast thou there?"

"Petition of a colonel of a Prussian regiment."

"He desires?"

"Petitions Your Serenity graciously henceforth to address him no longer as 'Thou,' but as 'You,' in order that he may be more respected by his inferiors."

"Is the fellow mad? All my life long I've used no formal address to any but a Field Marshal or Privy-Councilor. I'm a German sovereign! Maybe they want me to say Monsieur? 'Tis the reading of romances that does it! Write no answer! Throw the trash away."

"Most humble petition of the poor subjects of the Lord von der Gröben, that there be given them in the evening half after seven a meal demanded by their ancient right and custom and denominated the 'half-past seven.' The Privy-Council is in doubt what to decide."

"Why in doubt? I have ordered that the peasantry be fed thrice daily, neither less nor more. They're not to feed uninterruptedly. I take no 'half-past seven' either. Their ancient right and custom concerns me not. Whoever resists can drag stones at the fortress."

A lackey announced that the French refugees who were

to be received were assembled in front of the castle. But the Elector was not yet through with his secretary.

"Read what thou hast there!"

"Most humble supplication and despairing cry of sundry Christian servants of God in the Electoral residence of Berlin touching upon the escape from prison of a most shameless atheist and rebel."

"That was sent to me personally, too. Who is this Knutsen?"

"Naught but a crier at fairs whose ill-digested talk should scare old women but not cathedral preachers."

"Is that so? And his rebellion against my authority?"

"That, with Your Grace's permission, is pure invention. This Knutsen, a confessed runaway theologian, is said to have run down the parsons mightily over his beer. There was no question of rebellion against Your Serenity."

"Thou growest warm, Stosch. I know thee well. Even thy father, good loyal man that he was, was half a free-thinker and Socianian without proper belief in our Lord's divinity. The parsons are in a great rage. How did this Knutsen succeed in escaping?"

"The turnkey let him out by mistake and will be punished."

"It vexes me. I like not dealings with parsons. Tell me thy opinion."

"Your Serenity permits Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics to live in peace side by side. The French Protestants, whom fanaticism drove from their homes, come hither. You have received Jews and commanded the Socianians fleeing from Poland not to be oppressed for conscience' sake. You protect the honest and punish the unruly and slothful. It could hardly be an agreeable spectacle to so great a prince to have a wretched visionary torn with red-hot pincers on

the milkmen's market to the delight of the parsons, because he desired to give the human reason a little breathing space."

"How eloquent thou growest, godson, who art commonly so silent. Aye, I know the long suffering of the Lutheran pulpits. I had my taste of it when my first wife died and they incited the rabble to throw stones at her coffin because a Calvinist lay within. But if you undermine the mob's faith, they will not throw stones, but turn murderers. God Himself cannot rule the world by reason. Therefore hath He bidden us to have faith. What sayest thou, eh?"

"I would reverently suggest that reason and faith are not antagonistic but harmonious when properly understood. The Bible is to be taken as a whole and not literally word for word, else bread should fall from heaven into people's mouths, even as it is written."

"Fantastic subtleties! The faith is not to be shaken! To punish thee for thy unbelief, write me an answer to these parsons. Say that we are determined to protect the evangelical religion and to pursue its enemies with severity and that the parsons are assured of our continuing favor. I want thee to dine with me, Stosch."

Slowly and somewhat stiffly yet cheerfully enough the Elector went from his study to his large dressing-room in order to be formally garbed. He had his good day and intended to dine with the court. Had Herr Stosch been a better believer he would have given thanks to God for so smooth a morning. How often during the winter and spring had the Elector not flown at him wildly. Frederic William Stosch had known his exalted godfather since early childhood; when he was a small boy he used to see him crossing the castle square and buying cherries of an ancient huckstress. Why had the years turned this man into a bitter tyrant? Stosch reflected that his master

could not oppose fortitude to the sufferings of the body because his mind had had no philosophical discipline. Yet out of the turbidness of that spirit there shone from time to time a gleam, as though it had once loved its fellow-men. He could not always have been as he now was—the embodiment of unfeeling political expediency. The secretary put his papers in order and went over the commands that had been given him. Then his thoughts drifted to the new chapter he had begun in his difficult book, and with joy he looked forward to his own study and to an evening in the company of his kind and solicitous wife.

In the meantime a company of the life-guards had drawn up on one side of the castle—handsome fellows in new blue uniforms with white facings. Opposite them stood a single row of pikemen in breastplates and iron hats, each holding his hugely long pike with that magnificent precision to be found only among the troops of Brandenburg. Grouped on the sand between the soldiers were half an hundred Frenchmen, many old men among them, as well as boys, all in shabby dark garments. Most of them were from Metz, where the persecution of the Huguenots had been so cruel. Among them one could observe not a few sensitive and cultivated faces. A noble ancient head was that of their pastor, David Ancillon, who had guided his flock hither through Germany. In his black robe and white lace collar, a little black cap on his long white hair, he stood there, one of his two sons on either side of him. Now lackeys came running out of the castle gate, followed by officers of the guard, behind whom, leaning on his cane but very erect, appeared the Elector, received by the long roll of drums. At his side were the four sons of Dorothea, even to the youngest. He was in simple Dutch garb; only his black velvet coat had golden buttons. At the gate he turned

back once more and with his little felt hat saluted his wife and her ladies, who were at an open window above. Then he beckoned to Ancillon and put a friendly arm upon the latter's shoulder: "Monsieur, I praise God that you have come to my land; I will protect you." The clergyman bent low and with tears in his eyes kissed the Elector's hand. The Huguenots, beholding this, burst into sobs and it was long ere they had calmed themselves sufficiently to sing their psalm, which is the 79th: "The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be food unto the birds of the heavens, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth." For in Metz terror had reigned. In the midst of winter they had been forced to leave their homes and their city; the oldest member of their congregation, the great jurist, Paul Chemevix, had just died at the age of eighty. Because the old man had withstood all threats and had died a Protestant, the order had come from Paris that his body was not to be buried in the churchyard, but was to be dragged on a ladder to the knacker's yard. Thither the congregation had gone daily to sing their song over the body of their patriarch, even as they had sung it daily on their journey into exile. Today, having reached their goal, they intoned the bitter words for the last time:

*"Ils ont donné les corps
De tes serviteurs morts
Aux oiseaux pour curée!"*

The song came to an end and Pastor Ancillon pronounced his well-thought-out discourse. He had been told to be brief, since the Elector could not long stand on his feet. Hence the aged humanist spoke a few simple sentences. He expressed his gratitude by calling the Elector a second Constantine and placing him above that Marcianus whom the fathers of the early Church at the Council of Chalcedony had saluted as

both Pontifex Maximus and Imperator. The Elector was moved and pressed the pastor's hand. A meal was to be served the congregation later. Now Frederic William turned and, holding his youngest son by the hand, approached the door. Just as he was about to enter a mounted messenger from Berlin drew up, dismounted, and saluting, gave him a letter. The silent crowd observed its sovereign opening the letter. He grew red with rage, beat the ground with his cane, and put the crumpled paper into his pocket. The letter was from the Crown-Prince. The latter had been commanded to proceed to Schwiebus to take over the province from the imperial commissaries and to receive the oath of fealty of the Protestant inhabitants who were passing under the protection of the House of Brandenburg. The Crown-Prince had refused to go. Unheard of! He would not take the trouble after all the bitter efforts made for his dynasty; he wrote that he was indisposed and begged his father to send a Privy-Councilor. The Elector thought he knew what ailed the treacherous fellow. He had not been bidden to the great meeting at Kleve and feared some disadvantage. Again a day so well begun had been horribly spoiled!

His tall thin wife was waiting for him within, and the family entered together. But there were shadows on their faces again as usual. As the Elector sat down at table the trumpets blew. The leaders of the French exiles were permitted to stand in the doorway and watch the Electoral meal.

God is far away, he reflected, and cares not for the world. Hard must be His heart. He makes our lives difficult and our old age joyless. Of seven sons the heir is the one who maliciously crosses his father's will. Perhaps that daughter-in-law was behind it all? Perhaps her Hanoverian kin tried to stir up contention! Who knows what the sleepless greed

of the Guelphs desires. Life flows fast. Why had he toiled for fifty years by night and day to create this state?

Aux oiseaux pour curée!

Reverentially, with pale furrowed faces the Huguenots looked on. They had come from a far, rich country into a poor one; the mighty name of this monarch had been as a Star of Bethlehem to them. Now they saw him somber and melancholy, sitting at his table, uttering no word.

PART TWO

★(1)★

THE Electoral couple did not return from Kleve until the late summer. Soon thereafter came an imperial courier with the joyous message that Budapest, after desperate Turkish resistance, had been taken by storm. The troops of Brandenburg had distinguished themselves by their valor. In order to celebrate this great victory by which Hungary, lost for five generations, was returned to Christendom, Frederic William commanded the "Te Deum" to be sung in all churches. Yet was his soul embittered. To begin with, the long, painful journey had been of but moderate profit to his house. No one discovered what he and his Dutch nephew had said to each other in their many hours of conversation. The cleverest were of the opinion that the moment had been agreed upon at which William was to announce to the world his claim to the throne of England. These matters were hidden in fateful mystery. It was an open secret, on the other hand, that the childless Duke of Orange had shown no inclination to assure the Dutch succession to his Brandenburg cousin. So Dorothea came away without provision for her oldest and had time enough on the long return journey to bewail to her husband the wretched prospects of her four sons. No sooner had the good news from Hungary arrived than there also arrived dispiriting messages concerning the condition of the troops sent to the Emperor's help. They were being wretchedly pro-

visioned; their commander wrote indignant letters to Berlin. Frederic William did not know, of course, that Rébenac had given Schöning six thousand thaler for the purpose of creating misunderstandings between Vienna and Berlin. It was true enough that the Brandenburgers were treated as Austria had always treated her allies. The losses were so frightful that Frederic William suspected a deliberate attempt to ruin his military power. In December Schöning arrived and a kind of triumphal entry was made. Officers dressed up as Hungarian hussars galloped by and there followed a huge wagon full of Jews. These were Schöning's most valuable booty, for they had considerable sums with which to buy back their liberty. The common soldiers who came later were hungry and in rags. They related that most of their fellows had died of exposure on the way back.

Thus disagreeable details had to be settled with Austria. Yet beyond these the Elector held fast to his great purpose—to have the Emperor in league with him against France. Hence the chamberlain and famous poet Frederic von Canitz was to use his exquisite urbanity at the Vienna court. He hated to leave his house and his beloved Doris. But since he was rich and cultivated, the Elector refused to dispense with his services.

A number of friends had been dining with Herr and Frau von Canitz in their beautiful house. There were his mother and stepfather, the friend of his youth Stosch, Thomas Altorf, and the Chevalier von Kolbe, who was still not quite determined to stay but was spying out land after land for a good position. The latter did not fit wholly into the intimate atmosphere. But he had been of some service to Canitz several years ago during a mission to one of the Rhenish courts. Nor was Kolbe so ill read but what he could hold his own among

the cultivated. The table conversation was in French out of consideration for Canitz's stepfather, the Baron Brunbosc, who after ten years' residence here knew not a word of German. Canitz's own father had died before the poet was born. His mother had then entered upon a long and most wretched union with a general, which had finally been dissolved by the special grace of the Elector. She had been well in her forties; she wanted a man, but was afraid of her countrymen. Like other rich people, she had an agent in Paris and it occurred to her that not only shoes and jewels, but also a suitable husband could be imported. The gentleman who had been imported arrived from Paris at the Leipziger gate. He did not, alas, square in all respects with the order that had been given. No one could have called him either handsome or vigorous; he was rather sickly and at least fifty. Nevertheless, the lady accepted him and married him amid universal laughter. Despite the world's jeers, Canitz stood by his mother and treated her husband kindly. The couple lived contentedly enough on an estate near Berlin. The weighty lady at last had a husband who could not presume to issue commands and the delicate elderly Frenchman was provided for for life. In Paris he had not always been sure of next day's soup.

After dinner the gentlemen smoked in the little Dutch room with its gay tiles and ornaments of Delft porcelain. Only Altorf did not smoke, because he had an appointment with a lady. He lived much at court now because he had been made the Crown-Prince's private secretary. Luckily, only a very few people as yet suspected the secret of himself and Erdmute von Bellin. The Elector's wife must never suspect the romance; she would indubitably have discharged her young daughter's lady in waiting at once. But Marie Amalia had guessed it and, holding herself to be unhappy too, she kept

her friend's secret. It had already been determined that after the Princess's marriage Erdmute was to accompany her to her new home in Mecklenburg. The dreams of the blue spring at Köpenick were doomed to be vain. The Duke Morris William had left long ago and ruled with many sighs his tiny principality.

Baron Brunbosc, having finished his pipe, went to fetch his wife. When Canitz, having conducted his mother to her carriage, returned to the room his friends were discussing the manners of the French in such a way as to prove that his stepfather had made a favorable impression. It was Altorf who was speaking:

"People complain that His Serenity lets all the French fugitives settle here and that more French than German is heard on the Berlin streets. I see no harm in that. This language happens to be the language of culture and reason."

"Wait!" cried Canitz and picked up a pamphlet from his table. "A few days ago this rhymed satire was sent me.

"We read and we write and we sing and we dance,
We play, eat and dress like the fellows of France!
Is 't not then pure folly to deem us of worth,
Nor acknowledge great LOUIS the lord of the earth?"

"That's high politics," said Altorf. "I wager that the versifier has been paid by some great Minister of State!"

"And hear further!

"By their elegant whores the French sickness is brought,
For the cure of it then a French potion is sought.
Whoever by French pitch is thoroughly soiled,
His palms by the grace of French favour are oiled!

"With French pitch! Is not Thomasius in Leipzig a good patriot? Yet he will soon lecture to his students on our necessary imitation of the French."

"Is that what my friend Christian is doing now?" Canitz exclaimed. "He has not written me since he left Berlin."

"I admire Thomasius. He dared to say from his professorial chair that there was more instruction in many a French romance than in some learned treatises."

"He may be right," said Kolbe. "The way of the world is described in these romances. I brought away little from the university. Clever stories like those of the Countess Lafayette will at least turn no one into a pedant."

"Truly!" cried Altorf. "I have read the *Princesse de Clèves* four times and still I find new subtleties. There is more knowledge of the soul and especially of the female soul in this book than had been learned in the previous thousand years. I venture to appeal for confirmation to Herr von Kolbe."

"I am entirely of your opinion. This romance reveals the soul of womanhood at its best, which, alas, is rare in this world. Thus the book is no guide at any court. There is a noble lord in it who loves madly the wife of a prince and yet honors her too much even to approach her. The Princess returns this love with equal passion, yet virtue forbids her the granting of the slightest favor. Her husband, knowing of her love, dies of grief, and she is so overcome that she awaits her own end in solitude. Now I have passed twenty years at courts and I have discovered that lovers follow their aims somewhat more recklessly. An unloved husband has the choice between fighting a duel or letting his wife do as she likes. Not many ladies resist rich and distinguished admirers, nor are they very severely blamed. Strict judges will only call that woman frivolous who changes her lovers too quickly."

"But consider," cried Altorf, eagerly, "the masterly descrip-

tion of an unhappy marriage! No one before has described the sufferings of a woman given over to a man she hates and forced to endure his detestable embraces?"

An embarrassed silence followed. Altorf was thinking of Erdmute von Bellin; the thoughts of the others wandered to the marriage of the Crown-Prince and Sophie Charlotte. There had been more whispering than ever at the court concerning the coldness which the Princess showed her husband. There was no doubt that she refused herself to him and one could observe them more closely now because they had come to Berlin on account of the Elector's greatly failing health. Frederic was to aid his father. Yet he was himself far from well. Since November his cough had tormented him again, even to violent paroxysms. A secret word of the physicians went from mouth to mouth: even if the Crown-Prince lived he would always be a sick man.

Canitz sought to break the silence caused by Altorf's indiscretion.

"And what does our philosopher Stosch think of the reading of romances?"

"That it is a waste of time. What is there so important about the doings of people? Leave it to inditers of comedies and low scribblers to delineate people's chattering and their amours. If the spirit is to be summoned to literary diversions, these must be noble ones. The deeds of Frederic William, for instance, would be a worthy subject for the genius of a Canitz!"

Hurried steps were heard mounting the stairs. The door flew open and the Councilor Besser appeared. The two poets were friends. Besser looked pale.

"Good day, messieurs! Forgive me, Canitz, for entering unannounced. I come from the castle. Things are very serious."

"What has happened?"

"Immediately after dinner the Crown-Prince fell across his bed as though he were dead. An apoplexy! His breathing failed."

"Merciful God!"

"The physicians came and did what they could. He breathes heavily but weakly."

"Do you think it is the end?"

"Danckelmann dashed in. Fortunately he was not far. He kept crying that they must cup the Prince! They refused. Doctor Krug said it would be madness and all theory was against it."

"And Danckelmann?"

"A magnificent fellow! He rushed out and caught hold of the surgeon. The ewer and lancets were ready. He insisted despite the damned enema-mongers."

"And would the blood flow?"

"Aye, feebly but enough for the moment. He began to breathe a little. After a while he opened his eyes. He is extremely weak. The Elector came to his bedside. His Serenity wept."

Herr von Kolbe with a very melancholy mien considered it fitting to withdraw. Altorf accompanied him. They naturally discussed Frederic's illness. If he were to die, Kolbe would have had all his trouble in vain and would have to return to be chamberlain and jester at some little court in the south. His means were much straitened, although he bore himself with independence and lodged in dignified quarters. He had paid careful court to the Crown-Prince, had been drawn into conversations and been able to secure rare pieces for the Prince's numismatic collection. But his progress had

been slow and his knowledge of men convinced him that Frederic's character had depths below depths. Eagerly he drank in Altorf's words. He was convinced that if he stimulated the clever but impulsive young free-thinker beside him, much information might be lured from him. Kolbe had never made the mistake of despising the confidences of those of lower rank.

"I could not help remembering," he said, thoughtfully, "your eloquent description of that romance. Will you permit me to write concerning you to friends abroad. I know more than one court that is eager to attract men of talent. One day, for instance, you described the Crown-Prince with a rare knowledge of the human soul. Yet one touch was lacking in your portrait. You described him as though he were a great man in a private station who would enjoy his days in the company of chosen friends. I cannot but think that he must nourish ambition, perhaps even passionate ambition. You may have overlooked ——"

"Not at all! Did I say that he has no ambition? On the contrary, he would surpass his father and bring his house to the highest peak."

"Perhaps that is saying too much, for the peak has been reached. He may, nevertheless, be a great prince."

"A great king!" Altorf had said it before he was quite aware. "That is what he desires to be and will be!"

"A king?" Kolbe stopped in his astonishment. Curious that he had not thought of it himself. "But the Emperor raises no prince to that rank."

"He will raise himself. The Elector of Brandenburg is sovereign in the Duchy of Prussia. Nor is the Emperor unfavorably inclined. The plan is riper than anyone suspects.

But it is not fitting that I should speak of it and I beg you not to mention it to anyone. The highest servants of the States are ignorant of the plan."

"Truly? Count upon my discretion! You have given your confidence to a friend."

★(2)★

FOR weeks the Crown-Prince lay abed. But he recovered from the apoplexy and even his cough improved. Once more the prophets of evil were refuted. He had always been narrow-chested and subject to indigestion and was accustomed to taking care of his health, although he rather injured it by an excess of medicines and drugs. Also he had a strong will to live and rule and his father's dislike of him but fortified that will. It was obvious that Frederic William treated the sons of his first marriage harshly. This was attributed to the nagging of his second wife. But what prevailed upon the self-willed monarch to subject himself to the rather stupid Dorothea to the point of partitioning his country? It was to be remembered that this robust and imperious ruler, married for years to a wife who demanded his delicacy and consideration, fell at middle-age under the influence of a woman who catered powerfully to his instincts and thus possessed him wholly on his carnal side. But in his soul there lived the bright shadow of his first wife. The realization of that caused Dorothea to hate her stepchildren, who, in some strange way, came to seem even to their father to be a living reproach. He drugged his conscience with the consideration that Frederic was little and crooked and suspicious and morose. But why did he not love Frederic's brother Ludwig, the handsome youngest son of the Dutch princess? The lot of this young man who, unnoticed,

clung to his father with a shy admiration, was lamentable. At fifteen he had been married to another child, a Princess Radziwill, whose immeasurable Lithuanian estates the Elector had desired to add to the possessions of his house. This marriage had remained childless. The Elector frowned and Dorothea caused it to be whispered that posterity was not to be looked for in that direction, the Prince being the kind who is averse from women.

In Frederic's room his brother was taking leave of him in order to join the Princesses. Frederic had recovered, but his body physician forbade him to go out during these stormy days of early March. Margrave Ludwig desired to accompany his brother's wife and his own. The two ladies, without being friends, had established a kind of comradeship within the contentions of the family. The Polish Princess was not so much of a philosopher as Sophie Charlotte, but she was even more self-willed, and so rich that she could annoy their mother-in-law in many ways. No one had shown himself more solicitous during Frederic's illness than Prince Ludwig, the next in succession, yet Frederic was thoroughly convinced of his brother's sincerity. Indeed, the affection of this brother of his was the Crown-Prince's greatest joy. He had days of contentment now, for his health returned and his family as well as the whole court had shown him in what esteem his life was held. The Elector himself had been profoundly cast down and had tried to make up for the estrangement of recent years by a belated fatherliness. And there was another thing, and this was the most beautiful of all. Sophie Charlotte had shown a delicate devotion that comforted him infinitely. She had wept and sat much at his bedside and he thought that she must love him. He attributed the hurts she had inflicted on

him to her youth. He was convinced that she would belong to him from now on and was happy.

He sat down at his desk in order to examine the latest gazettes from Leyden which his secretary Altorf had brought him. He took off the glasses which he assumed only to give him an appearance of dignity, and his glance fell upon the vitrines in which his collections were kept. He walked over to one of them. What attracted him was the quiet obedience of all these delicate creations. He refused to consider these things as dead; he found them to be more vivid and cleverer than most people. They entertained him without contradiction or hidden rancor. They stood there as though awaiting his caress, and indeed when he was all alone he would gently pass his hand over one object or another. His paintings and his precious collection of medals were at Köpenick. To the latter he devoted much time and study and was quite an expert. But those little works of art showing in relief the heads of eminent men were a little stern and solemn. Here, in his Berlin apartments, on the contrary, he kept the pretty and charming things that had an intimate significance. Never had the great vitrine with its ivory front and its little blue columns and its gilded statuettes seemed so charming to him. In it appeared in all their splendor his pieces of Augsburg and Venetian glass, some magnificently painted, others with castles and landscapes cut into the glass, according to the latest fashion. Next to this vitrine there stood a smaller Chinese one all of ivory, and upon it the little Chinese ship that could be wound up by clockwork, so that it spread its little sails and seemed to make a lake of the table.

He looked about him. He really wanted to try the little toy. But if a lackey suddenly came in he would be reputed to be childish. He delighted, like his father before him, in all that

he learned of the land and the people of China. He had seen pictures on lacquer and admired the precise delicacy and the restrained smiles and the courteous gestures of the little figures. There was another great chest of black wood in the room which Frederic esteemed most highly. It had been made by an artist of Nürnberg according to his own directions. None but himself could open it. Into its door were set glass plates of green and blue. Between them scenes from the *Jerusalem Delivered* were painted on the wood. From a little chain, next to the lock, depended a key. But if you tried to unlock the chest thus, you heard only the ringing of little bells, nor did the door open. The real lock was an intricately secret one. The Prince alone could use it. When he did, several springs gave way and the door opened. The highest and the lowest compartments were filled with rarities: all the nine muses exquisitely carved upon a splinter of elephant's tusk; an ivory Cleopatra three inches high who wound the deadly serpent about her throat. Furtively Frederic glanced at the door and raised the little lady to his lips. There was a marvelous artificial eye and a collection of cane-heads in ivory and silver. There were eleven sets of chess-men. The costliest was Turkish; he had bought it of a Jew in Würzburg. Next to tiny enameled watches stood a lovely little trick-box of steel and gilt bronze. There was a cock on its top, and when you pressed a little button the cock disappeared and a cat stood in its place. The Prince had formerly possessed a number of these amusing toys; he had given them away as beneath the seriousness of his station. The middle compartments possessed a special door which needed two keys to open it. For here were things that no other hand was to touch—secret seals of crystal and silver, a fishbone set in lead on which he had nearly choked in his childhood, and a little capsule of gunmetal

within which were the signs of the zodiac and a death's head in gilt-relief. There was a miniature on ivory of his mother in her youth; there was a cracked golden ring which he had given his first wife on their betrothal. It had broken, one knew not how, at the time of his second marriage. Here, too, he kept all portraits of himself, as well as a tiny set of silver scales so delicate that it could weigh a hair. It belonged to a little set of apothecary's implements. The Prince, in spite of Danckelmann's warning had always been fond of playing with poisons. Like some Oriental potentate, he swallowed tiny portions of various poisons to render himself immune against treachery. Here, finally, were the autograph letters of congratulation sent him by the Emperor and other potentates on the occasion of his two marriages. Hidden behind all else in a wooden box were drawings of all the royal crowns of Europe. Beneath these, made by skillful painters, were various designs for a new crown.

His thoughts nowadays had dwelt much upon great affairs. Following the habits of his childhood, he had questioned fate by means of attributing significance to daily events. If the Elector came to his bedside tonight; if Sophie Charlotte entered before the clock struck; if Danckelmann wore his pike-gray coat—then so and so would happen. All omens had been favorable. Once he thought he had caught a somber look from his father and was terribly frightened that the matter of Schwiebus had been discovered. Altorf might have betrayed him to gain favor. This self-torment had depressed him and he had prayed much. His sickness had drawn him closer to the Protestant faith and, knowing the schemes of Rome and Vienna, he vowed never to turn Catholic. Then he ventured a question concerning the Schwiebus affair and found that all was well. Favorable signs were granted him:

he was to succeed his father; he was to beget a son; he was to be crowned a king.

Frederic knew that his antechamber was full of people and that in a moment the chief valet Biedekap would enter to announce the names. The negro Ordu had already come in; without stirring he was present at all audiences. The Crown-Prince could no longer dispense with this creature when strangers were about. He now considered whom he was to receive. If Danckelmann were there he must be given precedence. He would much have preferred the Chevalier von Kolbe, who for some inexplicable reason had become indispensable to him during his illness. His lively conversation had been more effectual than most of the prescriptions of Dr. Krug. Even the Crown-Princess, who thought the Chevalier somewhat lacking in wit and learning, succumbed to his charm. Kolbe, in fact, did not talk a great deal and restrained his humor. But his very presence did one good. He brought with him something bright and festive. Who else was there like that! The Brandenburg courtiers were mere bores under their embroidered coats. Even the Ministers of State lacked polish; even his own Danckelmann was only a sour mentor. Kolbe came from the south, where he had associated with Frenchmen and distinguished prelates. And there was something else. Whenever he was alone with him Frederic noticed a change in Kolbe. He was reverential; he was devoted; he took no liberties. Frederic felt in the man a respectful personal affection which he desired. His friends were to be obsequious but still friends. He had at last found some one who gave him not cold duty, but a willing serviceableness. He had long considered bestowing on Kolbe his personal Order de la Générosité, which he bestowed rarely and only upon the few he trusted most.

Biedekap announced that Danckelmann had not appeared. Hence Kolbe was admitted at once and everybody else dismissed. The Crown-Prince observed Kolbe's unusual procedure upon entering. At the door he bowed deeply from the waist down, in the prescribed way. He came forward to repeat this gesture, but first advanced one foot in front of the other and bent the knee in that Spanish fashion which had been discontinued at most courts and was now reserved for the imperial family alone. Frederic stretched out his hand to be kissed. Kolbe brought him a handsome Dutch medal struck in memory of Admiral de Ruyter. The Crown-Prince was delighted; he had long wanted this piece in his collection. He asked the price. Kolbe, standing beside the table, besought the Crown-Prince to accept the medal as a sign of his devotion. This condescension would be a precious memory to him when next spring he would be forced to return to South Germany. The Prince raised his head in sudden vexation. Kolbe observed this. He had uttered his words after careful consideration, determining to take this step while the exalted convalescent was still confined to his rooms.

"So you will leave us?" asked Frederic. "I regret that. I regret it very much. What drives you?"

"My own small affairs require attention. I had no intention of lingering a year in Berlin. What held me here was the vision of a mighty State whose fate under a more sublime guidance will be even greater. In the meantime my estate has been without supervision. It will take me three months to set things to rights. During that time I can choose the court I am to serve. I am happy in that I have several advantageous offers. To be sure, it will all seem provincial after Berlin."

"Herr von Kolbe, stay here! I find your character suitable

to certain intentions I have. Or perhaps you are already bound elsewhere. That would not please me."

"I am not bound. But I must confess to Your Highness that a ducal court insists upon my making a decision."

"Refuse! Trust the star that brought you hither. 'Tis I who speak to you. Do you need more?"

"Your Highness beholds me utterly astonished and deeply moved. If I ——"

"Will you obey?"

"I shall obey!"

"That is well, Kolbe! Very well! Not always may a prince reveal his entire thought. If he is to give his confidence he must be assured of entire compliance. I find that lacking at this court. The servants of my father are able men when properly directed. But they are all arrogant. I purpose to change that. There must be but one will. My task is difficult. Will you aid me?"

"Of that I can assure you before God! I am too insignificant to be of use in the affairs of a great State, but no one shall exceed me in devotion to my true master."

" 'Tis well! I will employ you."

"If Your Highness can use one who desires to be wholly your servant, I am he. How happy should I be if you would grant me today the familiar 'thou' which is the due of a true servant from his king."

"His king?"

"I beseech your forgiveness! The enthusiasm of this hour set me on fire. And yet I know that there are mighty events in the womb of the future. I have the gift of recognizing those heads that are destined to wear a crown. They are different from all the other heads of men."

Frederic looked at him long. He wanted to question him,

but restrained himself and said, simply, "Wait!" He went to the chest and opened it again and simultaneously beckoned to the Moor, who instantly fetched his master's sword from the adjoining dressing-rooms. Out of the chest Frederic took a little cross of gold and blue. Twice inscribed upon it were the words "La Générosité." Kolbe knelt on the floor.

"Generosity of spirit—that describes the character of a knight. To protect the oppressed, to resist enemies, to obey his lord. Dost thou take the vow?"

"I do!" He received the cross and kissed the hand and the sword.

"Rise then, my knight and vassal! Thy first duty is not to reveal this matter to the world until I permit thee. Hide the order. Whenever I am in Berlin present thyself twice weekly in my antechamber. Wait for commands which will reach thee in secret. Observe who is my enemy and who my friend. The hour will come in which I will need thee."

"I am at your Highness's disposal."

"Circumstances prevail upon me to make a secret of thy appointment. Thou wilt be able to serve me all the better. Thou shalt receive the wage of a chamberlain of the first class, but it will not be paid thee until a somewhat later day. Until then thou must exist as thou canst. That will suffice for today."

For some time the Crown-Prince remained alone with his reflections, which seemed not to be unpleasing.

When he went to his wife he found her in evening gala. The court had been commanded by Her Serenity to attend a concert at six o'clock. Sophie Charlotte had sent out her maid, but was still in front of her mirror putting on the magnificent jeweled necklace which he had given her a year ago. As always, he saluted her with formality. She beckoned

him agreeably without rising. The light of the candles did not yet fall fully upon the precious stones. She had grown handsomer and a trifle stouter.

"Monseigneur, you come at the right moment. Lift yonder candlestick so that the light falls over my shoulder!"

"I shall call your women."

"But why? Lift it, please! You do it very well. Or are you afraid to be left alone with your own wife?"

"Ah, madame, you jest! On my lips that jest would be both bitterer and truer. Did you pass the afternoon pleasantly?"

"Very pleasantly. My brother-in-law Ludwig is a most perfect cavalier. He adores you. His wife was most amiable."

"Who else was with you?"

"Only Madame Krosigk and the Count Christoph Dohna."

"Peter again. He is in your favor, madame!"

"*Monseigneur serait donc jaloux?* Send little Peter away if he vexes you!"

"You will outshine all the other ladies at the concert."

"*C'est une de mes habitudes.* What a pity that the stupid doctor still refuses to let you go out in the evening. I should have been so happy to appear at your side!"

"You say that, Charlotte! Since when do you value my presence?"

"I am very sorry, Monseigneur, to hear you ask that. I thought the last few weeks had convinced you of my friendship."

"Most true. Your solicitude moved me to tears and I am not ungrateful. Nevertheless ——"

"Monseigneur, I must go. If I am not in my place my mother-in-law will give me the most terrible glances."

"Charlotte! May I wait for you here after the concert?"

"Monseigneur, I shall be most happy."

She made him a deep curtsy and he kissed her hand. But before she went she turned back once more to the mirror. On a tiny table stood a golden snuff-box which her cousin Liselotte, the Duchess of Orléans, had sent her from Versailles as a wedding-gift. With the tips of two fingers Sophie Charlotte took a little pinch of snuff, raised her fingers to her nose, and delicately shook off the superfluous grains. Then she walked out.

The Crown-Prince was taken aback. He hardly knew why, but at this moment the Princess's taking snuff did not please him.

★(3)★

AFTER his complete recovery the heir to the throne, according to the advice of his own Dr. Krug as well as that of Dr. Marholtz, the body physician, was to proceed to Bohemia to benefit by the waters of Carlsbad. Before he could leave, there arose in the sovereign family a confusion so terrible that it was long remembered with horror. The illness of the Crown-Prince had but temporarily restrained the demons of contentiousness native to the house. They broke out now with redoubled force.

The princely couples had lived too close to each other that winter in Berlin. There were the old Elector and his wife Dorothea and their six children. Marie Amalia was busy preparing for her approaching marriage. Then there were Frederic and Sophie Charlotte and Ludwig and his Lithuanian wife and a host of courtiers and servants. The castle was so crowded that the very air was sultry. Everyone was longing for the spring when the Elector would take up his accustomed residence at Potsdam.

On the day before the removal the Elector gave a formal dinner. There were a number of German princes in Berlin, relatives of his house, among them the Mecklenburger duke, an insignificant young man, who was soon to become his son-in-law. All the foreign ambassadors were there, headed by Baron Fridag and Count Rébenac, the centers of the two

great parties at court. The Ministers of State came as well as the officers of general rank. To his two field-m Marshals, the Prince of Anhalt and the incredibly aged Baron Derfflinger, the Elector had just added the Duke of Schomberg, the famous old French general who as a Protestant had left the service of the French King. At this court, torn by intrigue and enmity, no hatred was so bitter as that with which each general regarded every other. The boldest and loudest was Lieutenant-General Hans Adam von Schöning, who, having conquered the Turks in Hungary, stalked about like the embodied glory of Brandenburg and demanded the highest honors. He considered himself slighted because the Duke of Schomberg had been appointed generalissimo of the entire army, and although he was Rébenac's payed hireling yet he acted like a German patriot whose pride had been affronted by the appointment of a French officer. Schöning's impertinence had recently been increased by the obvious favor shown him by the Crown-Prince, who desired to be friendly to the brilliant general in order to assure himself of the support of the army on his accession. Frederic's former friendship for his uncle Anhalt had turned into suspicious enmity. It was Anhalt who had persuaded him in the Schwiebus affair to betray his father to the Emperor, and who then, when the time for signing the treaty had come, had let him wait in terror week after week on account of the illness of his daughter. The Elector was no better inclined to Anhalt, whose incompetence and venality he perfectly understood. While his rank remained the highest, it was known that the Princes hardly wanted to see him, which made it difficult for the master of ceremonies to assign him a seat on formal occasions. This matter had become especially vexatious since Rébenac in an insolent mood had one day asked Anhalt at the Electoral table whether he was satisfied

with the Austrian money or had even received the reward promised him by the Emperor. Thus things stood—servitors and kinsmen at one another's throats and the master old and ill. But although Frederic William's body had grown feeble, he observed far more than was thought. Nor was he so weak but that he could have shown them who was the master. But he was not displeased to let them reveal their own treachery and bestiality. He had grown bitter. If they were evil, let them be so quite openly. He could the more easily make use of them.

Three festive tables had been laid—one at which the Elector and his wife, and two smaller ones at which the two older sons and their wives presided. No one was satisfied with the place assigned to him. Neither the field-m Marshals nor the ambassadors considered the distance between themselves and the Elector short enough. Ministers of State who were commoners resented the precedence given to noble nobodies. The two daughters-in-law thought that the highest lady had never before treated them with such high-handed arrogance. The swarm of third-rate German princelets at the tables had no notion of the cabals active within this circle nor of the great European political issues that lent their color to everything. Their insipid provincial pretensions did not arouse satire this time so much as nervous irritation and impatience. While Count Rébenac was hoping against hope that some careless person would let slip out news concerning the purpose of the establishment of the five new regiments ordered by the Elector, a Princess of Holstein at Prince Ludwig's table regaled the company with the mighty affairs of the courts of Plön and Glücksburg. The kith and kin of the Elector's wife, the Holstein-Augustenburg crowd, were present in full force. The talkative lady had lived here for long. She was married to a

Duke of Holstein-Beck who had been provided for with a berth in the army. Absent-mindedly the handsome young Prince Ludwig listened to the chattering of this woman. He had never felt so unhappy as this spring. He had to fight back his tears, so contemptuously had been his father's public treatment of him. Nor was there much comfort for him in the immediate future. He had been ordered to join the Elector at Potsdam. He had yearned to travel this summer. Harshly his request had been refused. The old man wanted to keep this effeminate son under his eye and make a man of him by strictness. Now Frederic was to leave, too, and so Ludwig would be separated from the only person who had any affection for him or ever took his part. He felt utterly desolate. What did he care about the affairs of these princes or the generals of his father? He was no soldier and such things disgusted him. He yearned for beautiful southern lands full of beautiful people and of the beautiful statues of nude gods. That terrible Beck woman was still talking court scandal. At his other side his wife was conversing in Polish with her countryman Byelinski, the Starost of Marienburg. Luckily the banquet was nearly at an end; dessert was being served and the Prince turned to a page behind his chair and asked for an orange. So soon as the Duchess of Beck heard this she cried, officiously, "Will your lordship permit me to serve you?" She took a large orange out of the silver dish and began to pare it. People pretended later to have remembered this orange exactly and never to have seen one equal to it in size. Prince Ludwig bowed to the Beck woman, ate the fruit, and then asked for coffee. Immediately the agile, over polite Pole Byelinski jumped up, took the cup from the lackey's hands, and brought it to the Prince. This was really no duty of his, although he was in the service of Prince Ludwig and his wife.

These insignificant happenings were much discussed later on and the descriptions of different witnesses varied in detail.

The Elector had set his departure for three o'clock. After the banquet he threw himself exhausted into an armchair in one of the small salons. Eight or ten gentlemen stood in front of him. Dorothea, frightfully thin and much aged, sat stiff and silent beside him. Frederic William's face was bloated and liver-hued; the bags under his eyes protruded. He was in state costume—the scarlet jeweled coat, the black-and-white silk scarf of his Prussian sovereignty, the yellow boots, and under his left knee the blue ribbon and golden buckle of the English Order of the Garter. He was listened to with tense respect. He had been quite as ill as his son during the winter. Not a month ago it had been said that they would both die in rapid succession. His frightful shortness of breath as well as the swellings on his legs were, according to the doctors, caused by gout. But old courtiers said that such dropsy had always put an end to the Brandenburgers. The old tyrant's temper was fiendish. The Crown-Prince was made to feel it, too. But the most lamentable victim had been the Margrave Ludwig, who had withdrawn weeping into another room and poured out his woe, not for the first time, to the French ambassador.

The Prince sobbed, "Count, I feel that I'm going to die soon."

"But, Monseigneur, look into the mirror! You are the picture of health."

"You are the only one who has shown me any sympathy. Could you not take me to the Mediterranean shore of your country? I shall perish here under my father's inextinguishable hatred."

"Life has everything to offer to one as young as yourself!"

"Not to me, Count. Remember my words! You see me for the last time today. I am going to Potsdam to die."

A croaking voice was heard approaching, well known to those two, who hurried out. Less than a week ago Frederic William had written to the Field-Marshal von Derfflinger, whom an indisposition kept on his estate, that his many petitions had at last been accepted and the chief command of the army intrusted to the famous Duke von Schomberg. Instantly Derfflinger appeared in Berlin hale and indignant, playing the rôle of the loyal old man injured by a prince's ingratitude, and flourishing the sword of Fehrbellin. At table he had been silent, had bowed exaggeratedly, and had pretended to be deaf. To annoy him the Elector had publicly embraced Schomberg. The old man then withdrew from the exalted presence and asked to be shown the new alabaster room. Returning thence, he was surrounded by his admirers of the Austro-Dutch party; no Francophile was present. In spite of his great age he held himself erect. According to the ancient fashion, he wore a white mustache and let his sparse white hair be seen, refusing to adopt the periwig prescribed at court.

"Did Your Excellency observe how disturbed Prince Ludwig was?"

"Fashion here! So'm I."

"His Serenity looked like thunder. The gout is said to have risen."

"Dost think His Serenity's parts are different from thine own? Let me be, good people; I'm old and foolish. I was colonel with the Swedes when they stabbed Wallenstein at Eger. Not so long ago, only fifty-three years."

"The whole army is in consternation at the thought of being no longer commanded by you," said an elderly gentle-

man, Major-General von Barfus, who had recently distinguished himself in Hungary and was accordingly hated by General von Schöning.

"Much you know, Barfus! At thirty-five thou wert still a lieutenant and thinkest thou knowest better than the master himself who throws me in the street? The Frenchman is no doubt cleverer than we are."

"Your Excellency," said Fuchs, who was among Derfflinger's friends, "the appointment of Schomberg has deeper reasons than appear; it robs certain people in the west of their suspicions."

"My dear Herr von Fuchs, you've got a head on your shoulders like your late father whom I heard preaching when you were still sitting on the chamber-pot. Politics are not my profession. But I understand the army of Brandenburg. I made it. And it's going to the dogs like the whole State. To hell with the Duke! I believe he's quite a proper man. But what does he know about our fellows from Brandenburg and Prussia? And all these Frenchmen enlisted in the army! Does anyone know whether the fellows are spies or not? And where's the money to come from? The treasury is as short of cash as a Jew on the Sabbath. Six months ago I was ordered to reduce the army by twenty-five hundred men. No money! I nearly killed myself doing it, and kicked the starving devils into the street. What happened? Suddenly five new regiments were ordered. Is that done for the sake of the French recruits? No Colonel wants the Frenchmen in his regiment, and have we got to starve our privates to pay the foreign captains? Are ye all mad? Four groschen a month are deducted from the infantryman's wage and you expect the poor brute not to starve?"

"Things look worse than they are," said Fuchs, soothingly, but it helped little.

"No damned nonsense, sir! I'll not hold my tongue; His Serenity can send me to Peitz for punishment. This is a swine's trough! First an army is sent to Hungary and then no proper treaty is made with the Emperor. Everybody thinks we'll no more be slaves of the French, and yet Rébenac is still cock of the walk."

"Your Excellency must remember what His Serenity often says over his glass of wine: no one knows what's in my mind and whether I hunt with the hare or the hounds."

"Very well. I bid you all a good day! Anyone who wants a bit of good Tokay and is an honest dog may see me at my house."

Holding himself high, he went. The rolling of drums was heard. The gentlemen went to the window. The Elector and his wife were entering their carriage.

An hour later Ludwig said a broken-hearted farewell to the astonished Crown-Prince and proceeded to Potsdam. He left his young wife in Berlin, knowing of the humiliations ahead of him. Scarcely had he arrived at Potsdam than he complained of sickness and threw himself on the bed in his room. The fact was announced to the Elector according to custom, but he feigned not to observe his son's absence from table at supper. That night he slept badly and in long conversations with Kornmesser complained of his two older sons' lack of vigor and ambition and their yielding to the least discomfort of the body. In his young days he had been in his chancellery or on horseback inspecting at four in the morning. 'Twas thus that he had forbidden the keeping of pigs in town and the open privies in the city. Otherwise Berlin would

be stinking today as it had done fifty years ago. His two sons seemed not to know what to do with their wives, either; luckily, he had other sons and could change his will.

When morning came Kornmesser hurried to Prince Ludwig. Being a Hollander, he was on the side of the dead Dutch Princess. He besought the Margrave to pull himself together and report to his father, who was in a dangerous mood. Wretched as he felt, Ludwig let the old man persuade him that nothing was wrong and determined to stand his father's test. But the Elector, who was working, refused to receive him and sent him the command to ride immediately to Spandau to assist at Schomberg's inspection of the fortress. The Prince was to report to the Duke and to give an account of the inspection to the Elector that night. Accompanied by two officers, Ludwig rode off. At the end of a quarter of a mile he sighed and leaned over and yielded to an attack of dizziness followed by violent vomiting. With great difficulty the two officers brought him back to the castle. The Elector saw the wretched procession from the window. His rage was boundless. He had been convinced from the start that Ludwig would try to circumvent his order and was sure that the indisposition was feigned. He paid no attention to his son, but commanded that he be prevented from communicating with the world. Hence a messenger whom Ludwig wanted to send to the Crown-Prince was stopped at the gate. The Elector ate alone with Dorothea and uttered not a word. He saw the silent jeer on his wife's face and determined once and for all to break the childish malice of his effeminate son. As long as Ludwig was self-imprisoned he would leave him alone; when the boy got bored he would take stronger measures.

That evening Kornmesser announced that the Prince be-

sought his father to come to him. It was Kornmesser's opinion now that Ludwig was really ill. Frederic William first stormed and then ordered a physician to see his son. Marholtz not being at Potsdam, Dr. March was sent. Knowing the Elector's state of mind, the physician stupidly prejudged the case. The Prince showed red spots on his skin. These, said the doctor, were common sulphuric exudations that afflicted many people in spring. March urged him seriously to get up next morning and prescribed a soothing potion. But the Prince did not get up next day. He said to Kornmesser that if his father wanted him to die alone on this bed, he was helpless. The Elector, having received the report of Dr. March, was more convinced than ever of the spoiled boy's stubbornness and sloth and concluded not to yield an inch. The Prince could eat nothing, but drank great quantities of water. He would not answer March's questions, which persuaded the doctor that the young man had a stubborn melancholy delusion and should not be pampered. Next day the Margravine sent a little present to her husband. It was not delivered. That evening Ludwig called for Kornmesser and begged him to tell his father that he was dying. The Elector determined not to give in to such hysteria.

Next morning two other physicians, having arrived from Berlin and examined the Prince, appeared laughing before the Elector with the report that the young man was in perfect health and could wait upon his father at any moment. The Elector did not reply and went on working. Less than an hour later an unseemly noise of people running and talking was heard in the corridors. Kornmesser rushed in to say that the Prince was lying stiff and motionless on his bed. Slowly Frederic William arose and, leaning upon a servant's arm, limped into his son's room. Prince Ludwig, handsome and pallid, his long blond hair upon the pillow, lay dead. His last sigh had

been heard by none. A dozen paces from the study in which his father, the sovereign of the realm, sat and worked he had died alone. The Elector was stunned; he felt unspeakably old; he drooped forward. Kornmesser caught his master's heavy body in his arms.

★(4)★

WHEN a cavalry officer brought the lamentable news to Berlin the Crown-Prince beat the table with his fist and cried, "Poison!" He ran to the door and commanded a carriage instantly. Then he bethought himself and asked after his sister-in-law.

The Princess Ludwig and Sophie Charlotte were in the "grotto" in the garden. Frederic postponed going to Potsdam in order to break the news to the young widow. Meantime Christoph Dohna was to mount at once and to convey to the Elector not only the Crown-Prince's sorrow, but his insistent demand that the murderers be discovered. The agile young Count did mount at once, but determined to give his message in a very indirect way. If these exalted gentlemen were determined to hurl violent expressions at each other, he was equally determined that none should hit his defenseless head.

The Crown-Prince did not go to Potsdam that day. Dohna reported to him in the morning that in the castle out there everybody was talking about poison and murder and was appalled at Ludwig's lonely death and the Elector's inhumanity. The latter had refused to see Dohna or anyone else. He had been heard sobbing as when a bear growls. Dorothea had taken to her bed after telling her children they did well to weep, since all guilt was put off on their mother. At this point in the report Frederic lifted his head; at ten he left

for Potsdam. He came upon Kornmesser and asked, "Poison?" The old man was loth to believe such things. It must have been typhus, only the physicians here were such asses. Frederic demanded to see his brother's body, which was lying in the summer-house in the garden. He knelt beside it and prayed. Then he sent for the Minister of State von Grumbkow and demanded an investigation in his threefold capacity of brother, member of the Privy-Council, and heir-apparent. Seeing that Ludwig had been the next in succession to himself, he would refuse ever to reign if this monstrous suspicion were not either to be proved or refuted. Herr von Grumbkow respectfully proposed that His Highness should make this demand of the Elector in person. For anyone else to suggest so terrible a suspicion without weighty reasons was to invite His Serenity's unbounded rage. The Crown-Prince said that he would talk to his father. But when he stood in the study and saw the heavy old man with his lightless eyes, he lost courage. Frederic kissed his father's hand, which did not stir. No word passed between them.

He asked whether he could wait upon his stepmother, but Dorothea could receive no one. Instead, her niece, the Duchess of Holstein-Beck, came into the room and began mysteriously to whisper concerning certain persons who had unnecessarily busied themselves with Prince Ludwig. What did she mean? Oh, at the banquet in Berlin she had seen the Pole Byelinski take the coffee from the lackey's hands and give it to the Prince. She could not swear that he had put poison into it, but he had done something and he had certainly not given the cup to the Prince at once. A lackey came in with cake and with Tokay in a silver cup. Dorothea was offering her most precious wine, which she did not often do. Thinking of other things, the Crown-Prince took a sip of the wine and

asked the Beck woman what motive Byelinski would have for the crime. She said 'twas obvious that the Polish government did not desire the Prince to have children and thus keep the vast Lithuanian domains in the possession of Brandenburg. Frederic was amazed to hear this stupid woman speak of political affairs so glibly. He offered no opinion, but commanded his carriage.

Arriving in front of the castle at Berlin, he was enthusiastically received by the populace. Ludwig's death was now known in the capital and the people were convinced that he had been poisoned by the Jesuits. Rumor had it that the city swarmed with them and that the very general of that terrible Order was now living at the Austrian Embassy.

Frederic sent for Danckelmann and told him what he had heard. He demanded a formal investigation by a special commission. Danckelmann was immediately to draw up a petition to the Elector. Danckelmann objected that such a document might make the most unfortunate impression upon the sovereign. Nothing was commoner than the talk of poisoning at the death of exalted personages. He adduced various cases. The Crown-Prince interrupted him. Was one to have a human being and a Prince murdered without the slightest effort? Either Ludwig's death was due to illness, in which case the whole medical faculty should be hanged and old witch-wives hired as body physicians, or else some dreadful secret source of disaster must be uncovered. Once more Frederic beat on the table so that the papers flew. Both of his brothers had been, as it were, struck by lightning. He himself had just arisen from a bed of sickness. He desired to know whether his mother had borne only sickly sons. Eberhard von Danckelmann was dumfounded. In order not to risk his influence, he bowed and obeyed.

The Princess Ludwig had recovered sufficiently to be indignant that two days had passed and that her parents-in-law had paid her no visit of condolence. The lady was young and had but little wit. No one knew whether she had loved her poor husband. Seeing that he was dead, she desired to mourn him in a manner becoming to her rank. She grew violently indignant when the Crown-Princess mentioned the suspicions attaching to Byelinski. She liked Byelinski and her Polish pride was stung. She asked after the source of the slander, and remembered at once that this Beck woman had herself served a huge orange to the Prince. She summoned the Crown-Prince and wept aloud and was with difficulty restrained from stigmatizing Dorothea's niece as a murderess before the servants. The Crown-Prince made a strict inquiry into what happened at that banquet and sought to use the utmost discretion. But an hour later all Berlin hummed with the new rumor that a certain Duchess of Beck had given Prince Ludwig a poisoned orange.

The Elector at last arrived quite alone on the next noon. He sought to console the young widow and also addressed Frederic William with unwonted mildness. He expressed his appreciation of the Crown-Prince's concern over his dead brother, but added that he could not bring himself to an investigation. He was convinced that Ludwig had been stricken down by a fatal fever. There was nothing left to do but bury him.

An hour later Kolbe was summoned to his master. They met unobserved in the grotto of the garden. The Crown-Prince explained that his father was averse to an investigation. What, as an obedient son, was his duty in the matter? Dankelmann, of course, counseled inactivity.

Furtively Kolbe observed the Crown-Prince, who stood at

the window of the little summer-house. He was evidently dissatisfied with Danckelmann. Yet Kolbe wondered whether he really believed in the story about the poisoning.

"What is thy opinion, Kolbe? Will it be the ruin of the State if, for once, I resist my father?"

"I venture humbly to remark that Herr von Danckelmann was a licentiate of the law at twelve. I am nothing at forty-four. Your Highness engaged me as a loyal servant. Your will is all the policy I can master."

"'Tis well, Kolbe! But will my father be irritated if I insist?"

"His Serenity probably will be irritated."

"But does he not irritate me without ceasing? Has he not always tormented his elder sons? Does he consider the State except to give it to the others. I trust thee, Kolbe! My father is in the hands of a terribly evil woman. 'Tis for her sake that there must be no investigation. Her minion accuses the Pole, because they themselves take a poisoning for granted."

He wept and Kolbe threw himself at his feet.

"Your Highness's soul will not be at peace without an investigation. In that fact I see the true advantage of the State. For a shadow might be cast upon Your Highness's entire life."

"Do thou compose a document, Kolbe, wherein, in terms that will not offend, it is argued that the honor of our house requires that evil rumors concerning exalted personages be proved or disproved. My secretary Altorf is to copy it."

At Potsdam next day Dorothea found an anonymous letter on her window-sill.

To Her Serenity the Elector's wife:

Agrippina was the name of a Roman Empress whom Claudius took to wife when he was old and childish. Britannicus was a handsome son

of Claudius by a former marriage. Locusta was the name of a treacherous mixer of poisons whom the Empress used to carry out her cruel plans. Agrippina planned the death of Britannicus in order that her own son Nero might inherit the throne. Locusta prepared a luscious fruit whereof Claudius died. Nero commanded Locusta to poison Britannicus, who succumbed to an evil potion. In the end Agrippina was murdered by that Nero for whose sake she had committed her crimes.

Agrippina of Brandenburg, remember the wrath to come!

Dorothea collapsed. She was so weak that she thought she would faint. But she struggled against her faintness, because she knew that she was subject to apoplectic fits. Twenty years in this house had broken her.

That afternoon a great crying was heard in the Elector's study. A mounted messenger had arrived with the Crown-Prince's second petition. Standing, the Elector read it and roared, "Damnation!" and tore it in half and threw it on the floor. Then he bade his secretary Ilgen pick up the fragments and read them with a somber expression. What was the meaning of this verbiage: "Personages of great importance at court whose dignity makes necessary the investigation of recent deplorable events." Was that aimed only at that goose of a Beck woman? Who had written this affected stuff for the Crown-Prince? 'Twas not in the manner of Danckelmann; that much was certain. He stood by the window reflecting how Frederic's unheard-of impertinence was to be dealt with, when he observed a carriage swiftly driving hither across the bridge over the Havel. In spite of the dust he recognized the Minister von Meinders leaving the carriage with dignity. It was evil news again. After dinner the Crown-Prince had been found unconscious in his room by Ordu. When he was carried to his bed and slightly revived by applying cold water he had murmured, "The Tokay!"

Frederic William knew at once what his son had meant

and caused himself to be attired in all haste. Now he had to get to the bottom of the matter. If the Crown-Prince was doomed, too, he would be at his bedside and without delay hold a terrible inquisition. He arrived by night in the torchlit courtyard and was carried up the winding stairs. At the Prince's door Dr. Krug met him. After violent vomiting the patient, though very feeble, was improved and was probably out of danger. Concerning the cause of the incident Dr. Krug begged humbly to inform His Serenity that His Highness had the fatal habit of trying strange drugs on himself and that he had probably exceeded his usual dose.

Frederic William listened in silence and entered his son's room. The latter whispered his thanks. Before retiring the Elector commanded Meinders to report at an early hour. In the morning, Dr. Krug pronounced the patient out of danger. Nevertheless, the Elector now commanded Meinders to appoint a commission to investigate the death of Prince Ludwig without any consideration of who might be involved. Thereupon the Elector left Berlin without having seen his son again.

The commission went into session. It cross-examined servants and courtiers in Berlin. It proceeded to Potsdam and subjected the Duchess of Holstein-Beck to a severe examination. The woman proved to be a feeble-minded gossip quite unable to ground her empty assertions. The commission returned to Berlin and examined not only the Princess Ludwig herself, but Byclinski, as well as all others who had sat at table on that fatal night. The results were *nil*. At the end of five days the commission commanded an autopsy. The doctors had been waiting for this. They were indignant at the popular rumor that the Prince had died of an illness which they had been unable to diagnose. They went to the Potsdam garden

and removed the vinegar-drenched cloths from the body and declared that *causa non naturalia* were responsible for death. They observed discolorations and other suspicious indications and declared formally that the Margrave had died from the effects of an unknown poison. The commission considered this document of the physicians worthless, but were obliged to transmit it to the Elector. The latter treated it with equal contempt. He discharged the commission with thanks and forbade the word poison to be mentioned.

Wroth at this result, the Crown-Prince refused for several days to leave his room. The Margrave Ludwig was buried in the cathedral church with military splendor. The Elector's wife being ill, all the ladies of the family absented themselves. Pale and shrunken, Frederic stood at the open sarcophagus beside his father. Father and son did not look into each other's face. The old gentleman returned at once to Potsdam and went to bed. Worn out by the horrors of this week, he arose much later than usual, only to be astonished by the news that his son was already here. Entering silently, the Crown-Prince merely begged with an embarrassed expression that he might now be permitted to go on the long-planned journey to Bohemia. The Elector granted the permission by a nod. With a still more embarrassed expression Frederic stammeringly explained that, according to unmistakable signs, Sophie Charlotte was with child. The old man raised his gray head and looked fully at his heir. But a dry, "I congratulate you," was all that he could bring himself to utter. Thus the interview ended.

That afternoon Frederic William stood long in front of the portrait of his first wife. Forty years had flowed drop by drop into eternity since their wedding-day. He remembered, but his memories seemed to have dried up. Long ago their first

son had died. Why did the youngest have to die, too? Only the second still clung, a half-withered branch, to the tree of life. The Elector really loved such somber moods. But even these he could not have in peace. Dorothea dragged herself in in a bitter rage and wept. Her niece had shown her a French letter of the Duchess of Hanover, who pretended to tremble for the lives of her daughter and son-in-law since the fatal "*poudre de succession*," had shown its dangerous power at Berlin again. What could that mean but that she, Dorothea, was accused of murder? The old tormented man's gorge rose. But he controlled himself and murmured that he would deal with this slander and conducted the tearful woman back to her bed.

But the self-restraint which he had recently exercised revenged itself. Grumbkow was with his master to receive orders. After political matters had been discussed the Minister asked whether the court would not desire to purchase the four beautiful dappled gray horses which the departing Dutch ambassador was offering for sale. At that the pent-up demonic rage broke forth.

"Horses, Grumbkow! Hast thou grown childish? I'll buy no more horses in this life! The black funeral horses that will soon be needed for me—my son can buy them, unless he's too stingy. Cradles you'll have to buy, not horses. Cradles, man, and christening clothes. Ye may already know what my son told me only today—that his wife is with child. What he did not tell me is who made the child. She's pregnant, the devil knows by whom. If anyone tells thee, Grumbkow, bring me the news. I'd like to know what kind of a family will rule here in my stead."

In his swift carriage Grumbkow gradually recovered. Al-

though he arrived late, he drove to his friend Meinders who was giving a *soirée*. Frau von Grumbkow, like most of the other guests, was playing l'hombre. Her husband joined his host, General von Schöning, and other gentlemen in a corner where, without neglecting the wine, the tragic events at court were thoroughly discussed. Later in their bed the Grumbkows continued to chat, and naturally Joachim von Grumbkow confided to his wife the remarks of the Elector concerning his daughter-in-law. Next forenoon Frau von Grumbkow, in order to console the poor Princess Ludwig and to show her that her sister-in-law was not greatly to be envied, either, repeated the Elector's words. These were naturally reported to the Crown-Princess on that very day.

Sophie Charlotte, unlike her stepmother-in-law, was a philosopher. Hence she did not weep. Instead she went to her husband and asked whether all preparations for their departure next morning had been made. If not, she would immediately leave by herself. She did still have parents in Hanover who would gladly receive her, seeing that her father-in-law in Berlin had publicly called her a loose woman. As a gentleman the Crown-Prince was obligated to revenge such an insult to his wife. But since he could not challenge the author of the insult in this case, the latter being not only his father but his liege lord, there was nothing left to do but to retire from the scene. She herself, at all events, would not return to this city or to this house during the lifetime of the present sovereign and his wife.

Deathly pale, Frederic listened.

The princely couple took its departure for Bohemia on the following day. There were only six carriages. Danckelmann and the secretary Altorf drove ahead. An hour later the Prince

and Princess followed. Ordu with pistols and daggers in his belt sat on the box next to the coachman. When they had left the walls behind them Frederic turned and looked at the splendid new Leipziger gate. He wondered when, if ever, he would see it again.

★(5)★

THE Elector had retired to Freienwalde.

He could not stay in Potsdam. Life in those familiar rooms had grown unendurable. His wife had gone to Pymont to recover from her apoplectic attack. Marie Amalia had finally been married off to the hereditary Prince of Güstrow. The tragic events in the family and last of all the rebellion of the Crown-Prince, who had always been fond of his sister, had seemed to necessitate the postponement of the wedding. But since Frederic delayed his return the Elector commanded the wedding to take place. It was as melancholy as a funeral, nor did anyone think that it would lead to much happiness. The bride refused to look at her narrow-chested blond lord. The family dined alone, whereupon the young couple proceeded to drive to Güstrow. Marie Amalia let her husband with two chamberlains drive in one carriage. She drove alone with Erdmute von Bellin, who was to continue to be her lady in waiting. This privilege had first been refused by her parents. She had made her mother a frightful scene. She asked whether any other girl of seventeen had ever been so wretchedly treated. No one had asked concerning her feelings for the prince; she was submitting to the will of her father; she would not be robbed of her single friend; there had been sorrow enough at Potsdam; according to all that she heard, there would be little else in her new home. She was not far wrong.

Her father-in-law, Duke Gustav, was known to be the most bigoted Lutheran among all the German princes.

Freienwalde had done the Elector good before. In earlier summers he had even brought the court here. This year his train was small. He had once built himself a little one-storied house near the medicinal spring. Here he lived with a few servants. He scarcely attended to the affairs of state. A profound melancholy hung over him. He sat in his rooms, which gave on a little, neglected garden, and turned over old papers. On certain days, a thing unheard of, he would not let even Kornmesser come near him. It was astonishing that his physical condition seemed to improve. Daily he drank ten cupfuls of the water of the spring. It was even said that he would go hunting again. His soul did, in truth, yearn for the lonely forests in which he had passed the restless years of his childhood. It was sixty years ago when his father had brought him to Küstrin to be safe from the imperial hordes. It seemed to him a goodly thing to await his end in those dark forests.

He recognized himself in this stubborn son of his. Though no one else was aware of the similarity, he was. He, too, had disliked and avoided his father. 'Twas not only rebelliousness, but this heavy melancholy of his nature. Let the world go to the devil! He cared no more. He had always been considered a born fighter and one who spared neither himself nor others in the pursuit of power and profit. Had they but known how he had had to force himself to these activities. At the beginning of his reign, during the most evil days of his country, he had hunted the deer and the wolves up there in Prussia, while his Minister Schwarzenberg in Berlin had become more powerful and arrogant day by day. Until one day he had had a sudden change of heart and had sprung at the throat of his Schwarzenberg who had desired to de-

throne him, if nothing worse. Ah, how would one face the world without this power of hatred. His father had died a despised princelet whom everyone kicked at, without troops, without money. Alternately the Austrians and the Swedes had wrung the population dry. In the Berlin castle there had been no room without a leaking roof. It was a long way from those days to these. And yet what had a lifetime of fighting and grasping and scheming availed him? One of his territories was here between Elbe and Oder, another on the Polish, a third on the Dutch frontier, still another by the Weser River—how could such a State survive? Despite his inhuman labor, the end was probably in sight! Then why not bring it about now that the Crown-Prince was in open rebellion? Better that the House of Brandenburg sustain itself in five small principalities than that it be destroyed. Prussia would go to Philip, who might marry the widow, the Radziwill! *He* would beget children! Perhaps the future would see the rise of a happier star.

Thrice had the Crown-Prince been summoned home by letter. He persisted in disobedience. Nay, he grew more rebellious. First he answered respectfully enough that he did indeed yearn to see his exalted father but that his health required further travel. He went, of all places, to his parents-in-law, knowing how that would enrage the Elector. He was now commanded to return. His answer was prickly with innuendoes. He was obliged, he said, to have some regard for himself and his wife in view of the fate of his brother. That stung the old man to the quick. If he had only never consented to the Hanoverian marriage. The Guelphs desired to fortify their dynastic interests at the expense of Berlin. No wonder that the Duke Ernst August incited Frederic against

him. He now harshly commanded the Crown-Prince to return and all payments to be stopped. The Councilors were informed that his testament was to be changed again and that to Philip's heritage of Halberstadt was to be added the Duchy of Prussia. Stosch was to fetch the necessary documents.

It was afternoon and Stosch had not yet arrived. The Elector seethed with ill-humor and impatience and went into the garden. Kornmesser made a motion to follow him and got an evil look. The old man succeeded in walking. In his shabby brown coat and old felt hat he looked like one of his own farm stewards. What did it matter? What did the poet say? *Forma viros neglecta decet*. Who was to prevent him from partitioning his State? He despaired of ever seeing the beginnings of just vengeance against Louis of France. The man had treated him like a lackey, aye, like a dog; he had forced him like a dog to show his teeth to the Emperor when the French thieves broke in and stole Alsace. All for the sake of Stettin, which afterward they robbed him of. 'Twas said that Louis's oldest son was a grievous care, too. An idiot! Always the oldest sons! The Moscow Tsar John Basilowitz had smashed the head of his heir with an iron club. That was not our way.

Unaware he had left his garden and entered the forest. Presently he could not find the way back and walked with difficulty on the edge of a sandy hill. Hence he saw again the church steeple of Freienwalde and reached a neglected graveyard. He was now near the road, but before he could reach it he heard a terrible screaming from a wretched hut that stood there. He was concerned for all that touched his subjects and listened. The woman screamed. It was the precentor and his wife.

"If thou take the stick I'll tear out thy hair so that the lice freeze their behinds off!"

"Confess then that thou tookest the four groschen from the pocket of my Sunday coat!"

"That filthy rag of a coat! The apothecary wore it for twenty years till 'twas too greasy. Didst thou ever buy thee a coat or me a length of cloth? I wear rags too filthy even for the parson's wife."

"I'd ha' been a priest myself, if the devil hadn't wedded me to his grandmother!"

"Thou a priest! Thou wert the same sot then that thou art now."

"Aye, at the White Horse in Frankfort on my way to the privy I found thee cleaning the chamber-pots."

"Why didst thou come into my bed by night? I was promised to the shoemaker and might ha' been mistress of house and gear now."

"Didst thou not pursue me till I married thee and played father to the whore's brat someone else had gotten on thee?"

"Thou callest thy wedded wife a whore? 'Tis a mortal sin!"

"Wert thou none—a serving-wench in the inn who lay with every carter that gave thee a tip?"

"And didst thou think that a lousy student like thee could marry a lady? Not thy one stinking shirt was thine own; I had a chest full of linen and twenty thaler cash."

"My father would ha' given me a thousand. But he threw me out when he heard of my marriage."

"I'm tired of this dog's life! The same thing every day for twenty years. Go to the devil, thou rogue! I'll beg my way. Eleven children I bore and all dead but the one."

"Aha, now I know. Thou stolest the money for the brat! Admit it."

"Aye, I admit it. I gave it to the tailor so that he doesn't beat the child to death. Thou wouldst pay nothing for his apprenticeship and the tailor takes it out on the child, while thou spendest thy money on rum!"

"The boy eats better at the tailor's than I!"

"Touch not the stick or I'll give notice and thy school will be taken from thee."

"Shall a teacher not know the connection between a cane and a behind? Every man beats his wife. 'Tis his good legal right according to both Roman and German law. The burgo-master beats his so that thou canst hear her howling from afar."

"Thou mangy liar, did I protest against beating? Aye, a woman should be beaten, but not too hard. Not with a stick. The law doth not specify the stick."

"I'll prove thee 'tis in the law. But hold thy tongue now; I must be off to sweep the church."

The precentor rushed forth, recognized the Elector at once, and dropped his cap in his terror. Now the woman came, too, a poor emaciated specter. The Elector turned around. He must speak to these people:

"I could not but hear you; ye are loud-mouthed, both. Thou art a great fool of a schoolmaster to put thyself and thy wife to shame in the world's hearing. Thy wife is no better, 'tis true. Here are two thaler; give one to thy wife. Then run to my house and tell them to send the small carriage for me. I'll wait here."

At home he met the secretary and asked if there were any news of the Crown-Prince. Stosch, commonly a most considerate man, dared not to avoid directness today. The Crown-Princess had had a fall and suffered a miscarriage.

"When did you hear that?"

"Altorf arrived yesterday. His Highness sent him on a financial errand. He is here with me."

Altorf was summoned in.

"Thou art the Dutchman recommended by Danckelmann. Where is he?"

"On his Rhenish estate."

"He likes not what my son does. A good man! Thou canst speak freely; I shall not be revengeful against my son's advisers."

"Since we left Carlsbad I have been sent on many journeys. It is Herr von Kolbe who enjoys His Highness' confidence."

"The man's no fool. What says he to the Crown-Prince?"

"He advises the return to Berlin."

"So? And what has befallen my daughter?"

"Her Highness slipped on the wet stairs on her way to the carriage and cried out. The Crown-Prince himself came immediately. The miscarriage took place several hours later."

"Is she ill?"

"Her Highness is very weak, but the physicians anticipate no danger."

"How did my son take it?"

"His Highness was deeply moved and remained in his rooms for two days. Now he is as usual."

"I understand. Thou canst go."

After an hour's work with Stosch he summoned Altorf again.

"Thou art no dullard. How long will my son stay in Hanover?"

"Herr von Kolbe was recently twice sent to the Landgrave of Kassel. I suspect that a change of residence is being planned."

"My nephew in Kassel, eh? Good! Tell me how are the relations among the exalted personages at Hanover?"

"Her Highness is happy to be in her own country."

"Does my son share this happiness?"

"Until the unhappy accident he showed no discontent. Since then ——"

"Speak out! I am thy master. What is to be observed?"

"The household of Their Highnesses, although most modest, is a burden to the Hanoverian court. The Duke's finances are said to be in ill case."

"They always are. My fat cousin should not spend so much on the opera and on his mistresses. He can't sell a regiment of peasant lads to the Venetian republic every day. No wonder it vexes him to feed a son-in-law. Thou mayest go, Altorf."

To Stosch the Elector remarked:

"The fellow does not displease me. 'Tis well that my son has no worse men about him. Is he reliable?"

"I will be pledged for his honor. I know him well; he has long dwelt in my house."

"A philosopher and heathen like thyself, no doubt. Thou wouldst not offer hospitality to a good Christian! What is to become of Berlin? Now we have called that Puffendorf, too, the archenemy of the theologians. Luckily he is but to describe my actions according to the archives. There's no philosophy in that."

"I venture humbly to suggest that philosophical truth is most strikingly illustrated by great lives. *Non philosophia sine virtute est, nec sine philosophia virtus*, as Seneca remarked."

"Pah! Life is a poverty-stricken thing. I see that now. Opportunity means most. The precentor of the village here is a sot and a rogue, yet had he been born a count he would have

made a passable ambassador. I pay not that sinful sum of money to your learned Puffendorf that he shall trick me out to be a great hero. He is to work his way in and out of that mountain of documents in order to present our case to the world with thoroughness. 'Twill be a lesson to you chancellors as well."

"I ventured the opinion that an heroic example would influence the world."

"Stuff and nonsense, Stosch. Thou art a good fellow, but what dost thou mean by an heroic example? Such words are for the poets who indite birthday odes for good hard thaler. I myself believed in such things when I was young and thought nobly of myself when reading my Virgil and my Ovid. But I tell thee 'tis all nothing. Whenever I put on a right regal air and seemed to myself a very Cæsar, a huger stone than commonly came flying at my head. 'Tis a question of delivering blows and enduring them. At the end of all, we have made some progress and gained some fame in the world. But we did it by tugging and panting, not by fluttering and posturing. What is a hero? 'Tis my fear that swelling words have gone to my son's head. Each thing in this world has its own measure and limit; ye cannot get more from it than it has."

The Elector had let himself go for once and spoken slowly and mildly. Suddenly the vulture look came back into his blue eyes.

"How much does the Duke of Weissenfels want? Give me his letter. Thirty-eight thousand thaler for the county of Burg! Answer that I'll give thirty-four thousand and not a farthing more. Thou canst go, Stosch. Nay, wait! What is this fortress which the French are building at Trarbach on the Mosel? I have sent an inquiry to Paris. Has an answer come?"

"None. Baron Fridag has conferred with Herr von Fuchs. The Emperor considers the building in opposition to all right."

"What did Fuchs reply?"

"He replied, in accord with your marginal note, that the building of the fortress was most disadvantageous to the Empire, but that protest should be raised only with the utmost precaution. So long as Vienna has not concluded the Turkish war, not the slightest pretext must be given the French for treacherously attacking the Empire. So many affronts having been swallowed, one was not likely to choke by waiting for the favorable moment."

"Right. I must eat now. Come at six in the morning."

Two hours later Stosch was called in again. He was afraid that the will would now be discussed. But he was only ordered to summon the chief Ministers of State hither. Frederic William had suddenly determined to hold a Council of State here and then to proceed to Küstrin for the beginning of the hunting season.

He had already put on his nightcap when he sent Kornmesser out again to fetch from the desk a document written in his own hand. No one had seen that document yet, not even Fuchs, who usually knew everything that pertained to the plans against France. This document was nothing less than the forecast of the great future campaign. The Emperor and Brandenburg and the rest of the Empire would furnish 154,000 men, not counting patriotic volunteers. Holland would send 35,000, and Spain 10,000 troops. This total army of 200,000 should be able to humble the French King. The imperial and North German armies should meet on the upper Rhine and march down through Lorraine. The Brandenburgers and the Dutch, 60,000 men, were to march straight

on toward Paris. The armies on the march were not to plague the French people, which was ready to rise up against the tyranny of the King.

He read the document with satisfaction and determined to reveal it to Fuchs at last. These thoughts must not be lost. His Majesty of Versailles might yet be taught a lesson.

★(6)★

For two hours the Crown-Princess had been sitting between the gleaming candles at her *cembalo*; she played admirably and during this stay in Hanover had sought to perfect herself under her old Italian master. She had not left the instrument for two hours, although she well knew that in an apartment near by her husband was walking impatiently to and fro. In this little hunting-castle of Rotenkirch, which belonged to the Guelphs, one could not so easily avoid one other as in a great palace. The six weeks in Kassel had passed pleasantly in the comfortable and extensive flights of rooms. But even the journey hither had been scarce bearable—sitting in the same carriage all day long, sleeping in adjoining rooms at inns. Why could her husband not have returned to Hanover instead of letting her aged papa come to these forests? But she observed now that there had long existed an agreement between Frederic and her papa. They simply were not wanted at Hanover. She was especially superfluous. Her father had his Countess Platen; her mother could carry on her daily discussions with Herr von Leibniz. With a sort of rage Sophie Charlotte played the long Italian runs and considered whether, since her papa had left immediately after dinner, she had not better go to Hanover alone. *À Berlin—jamais!*

Her lady in waiting, Madame Krosigk, who was sitting behind her, was restless. She knew her mistress's thoughts.

Furthermore, her old liege lord, the Duke Ernst August, had spoken very harshly to her that morning. At first, to be sure, His Highness had welcomed the princely fugitives with great affection. Everyone knew that, far from soothing his daughter and her husband, he had stirred up their hatred against Berlin. Later he found out that his hospitality was costing him too much money. Moreover, the terrible old Brandenburger might really disinherit his son, in which case Hanover would have to feed the princely beggars for life. Very sternly the Duke had said to Madame Krosigk that it was highest time to put an end to this escapade which had now lasted for six months, as though it were Krosigk's fault. It was her duty he had said, to persuade Her Highness to return to Berlin. Easily said!

It seemed as though Sophie Charlotte were minded to continue her music all night. Since it was not for her pleasure or her husband's there was no one to be entertained by it but the servants. Suddenly the door flew open and Madame Krosigk gave a feeble cry. In his blue silk robe appeared the tall negro Ordu and on stiff outstretched arms carried toward the Crown-Princess a cushion of red silk. Sophie Charlotte immediately stopped playing. With hysterical shrieks of laughter she took the cushion and threw it on a chair, while the negro backed gravely out of the room.

"What do you say to that, Krosigk? His Highness has the most enchanting ideas, hasn't he? We must not be lacking in gratitude. Send to the kitchen, do, for a nice fat Göttinger sausage!"

"If Your Darling Highness would only take my advice and be the sweet Princess Lottie you used to be ——"

"Oh, you wicked woman! Are you in league against me, too? Did the Crown-Prince promise you a bracelet, or papa

a position for that stupid brother of yours? Everybody abandons me. Where is little Platen?"

The young page whom the Duke had sent out was a nephew of the reigning mistress. The Crown-Princess seemed half mad. Lackeys scurried about. A huge sausage was brought forth and a head of lettuce and radishes and a round Dutch cheese. The servants opened their eyes and mouths and poor Krosigk was beside herself. Her mistress demanded a silver salver which, with the various edibles, was placed on the red cushion and sent by the page Platen to the Crown-Prince. Immediately arose a violent hubbab. The silver platter was heard to crash on the floor. The boy with a blue mark on his face came running back in tears. Now the appointed moment had come. Sophie Charlotte walked into her husband's room. His temper was so violent that his periwig had nearly tumbled off. But before he had a chance to speak he looked up and hesitated. He found his wife more desirable than usual. This gave her the first word:

"Monseigneur, you have treated my little envoy most ungraciously! You are much more accessible to the silly jests of others."

"Madame, I beg of you to remember who we are and what beseems us. On this long journey you have become accustomed to a looseness of demeanour that is intolerable."

Sophie Charlotte curtesied almost to the ground.

"Monseigneur desires to play the part of the master!"

"I am the master, since you refuse to see me in any other part."

"I am so unfortunate as not to grasp Monseigneur's meaning."

"In spite of your learning you never understand me. At all the great courts the silken cushion is the sign given by the

sovereign to his consort. 'Tis not the first time that you have received it. Did you not know its meaning?"

"But I knew it perfectly. Monseigneur has an appetite. I sent him the wherewithal to satisfy it. That was proper."

"Tricks and evasions! The first Crown-Princess never ventured to behave thus."

"More than yourself I regret the death of that poor lady whose position I am so unworthy to occupy. I truly wish that she were in my place!"

If Sophie Charlotte had loved her husband but a little she would have wept as she uttered these words. But she faced him erect and unapproachable with her clever eyes. As they stood there, measuring each other's strength, both small but very proud, in the salon of an abandoned half-uninhabitable castle, among the dusty shabby old furniture, they seemed like two figures in an old Italian comedy—Columbine with her soft regular features, an adorable doll's head under the black curly locks, and poor, hunchbacked Pierrot exquisitely dressed, pale as death, wooing the cold Columbine with wounded eyes, rage and tears in his heart. He answered:

"She was your equal neither in beauty nor in understanding. She was only devoted and sought to please me. I hope, Charlotte, that all will be better when we are in Berlin and you have rid yourself of this restlessness. We are going tomorrow."

"Impossible, Monseigneur, quite impossible! Tomorrow is the day for washing my hair. At this season it will not be thoroughly dry until day after tomorrow, and the next day is Sunday."

"Will you promise me to hold yourself in readiness on Monday?"

"Did you not promise me that I was not to return except as the sovereign's wife?"

"That is true, but it is impossible. Your father admits it. The Landgrave of Kassel, the Prince of Orange, and the King of Denmark have all besought me to return immediately and to avoid complete disaster."

"And your brother Ludwig? Do you forget the poison?"

"We exaggerated these things. My brother was ill."

"'Tis well! Go home if you like! I will not re-enter the house in which I was so insulted."

"Charlotte, try to have some insight! My father is old and irritable. 'Tis not as though he were well and happy. And who repeated the words? The drunkard Grumbkow. He is no man in whose words one puts faith!"

"Ah, Monseigneur, if you thought him a slanderer, why did you not run your sword through him. That is what my brother would have done."

"I am in a frightful position, Charlotte. It is a question of saving my very throne. Be magnanimous!"

"I don't prevent you from going. I shall stay here."

"You know that my father insists on your accompanying me. He is near his death and would see his house united."

"I would only be a false note in that harmonious family. Your stepmother cannot endure me. The two who loved me are gone. Ludwig is dead and poor Mimette has been handed over to that wretched Mecklenburger. I am all alone. I don't like the ladies of Brandenburg—forever pregnant to the teeth, ill-natured to the hair, stupid to the heels!"

"And I? Do I mean nothing to you?"

"I did not say that. But it is late, Monseigneur. Behold the disorder which your violence has created! The sausage flew into yon corner. On yonder armchair sits the salad. I shall have to give little Platen a bag of sweets to soothe his feelings."

"If only your heart were equal to your understanding. But you are not as indifferent as you would appear. You have been regarding the Danish ambassador to Hanover not without pleasure."

"I don't remember. Who thinks of such people?"

"I have initiated you into my thoughts and into my great design. You will be a queen some day!"

" 'Tis Kolbe who amuses you with such notions. Beware of that intriguing flatterer."

"He is nothing. I will crush him when I want him no more. I am master of them all."

"Of Herr von Danckelmann, too?"

"He will never be important. One grants him passing liberties, because in one's childhood he repeated to one the *hic*, *hæc*, *hoc*."

"I care not to be a queen; I love simplicity and find the pomp of a court repellent. At heart I'm a republican."

"Chimeras of your philosophy!"

"Speak not against philosophy. 'Tis the one sublime thing in life."

"You will be able to enjoy it fully. Hear the plan that I have, Charlotte. When once I am Elector I will give you the forest on the Spree by the village of Lietzow. There we shall build a castle for you, where you can devote yourself to music and philosophy all day long and come to the city only when you would. I have even found a name for that castle, a beautiful name—Charlottenburg."

"*C'est ravissant!*"

"And my reward therefor?"

"Pray do not touch me! Nay, it is late. They would all laugh! After this contention!"

"Who are these wretches? You are my wife!"

"I know it! Let me be! Three years married *et deux fois enceinte!* *Merci, j'ai fait mon devoir pour la maison de Brandenburg!*"

"How ill-natured! Our house is an exalted one; it traces its descent from the Emperor Augustus."

"So does everyone in our circles. My great-grandfather was King of England and my grandfather King of Bohemia."

"For but a very short time."

"You should have married into a better family. Good night, Monseigneur."

"And you have no other word for me?"

"There lies your beautiful cushion. Let your negro pick it up."

"Good night, madame."

At the same hour the secretary Thomas Altorf and Erdmute von Bellin were staying together at the wretched inn of the village of Steglitz, an hour's distance from Berlin. Erdmute had been sent from Güstrow to see to the transportation of the Princess Marie Amalia's trousseau. The lovely Erdmute was profoundly restless. Not for the first time did she reproach Altorf with his lack of active ambition. Her youth was fleeting and there was no joy. When they met at long intervals she found him in a somber mood.

"How sad life is! We two must hide in a mean inn. The Crown-Prince has a heartless wife. My poor little Princess was given to this fool and lives at the most depressing court in Germany. If it were not for me, Thomas, she could not endure it. 'Tis like in my home in the country—beer and the Bible! We dare read a romance only in her room, and if some one knocks I hide it under my embroidery-frame. The old Duke spends his days writing letters to parsons."

"Ah, why can we not escape from courts and parsons? Why did you not flee with me on that first day?"

"You are a dreamer. Everywhere there are princes and clerics! Would you flee to the Turks? I am not bigoted, but I believe in God according to Martin Luther's catechism. I am living with you in sin and I yearn to be free of it. If only I were divorced! Acquire favor and it can be done. 'Tis said that a good mind can rise high in Brandenburg. Are you not in the good graces of the Crown-Prince?"

"As much as ever and also as little."

"Is he not satisfied with you?"

"He is. Only at the very beginning I rendered him a service such as I can never render him again. My best was given too soon."

"What was that service?"

"A very secret matter. But I risked my head."

"Did he reward you?"

"He made me his secretary."

"That is not enough. But surely he will advance you upon his accession."

"He returns to Berlin in a few days."

"So Sophie Charlotte returns in spite of the affront? Do you think it was really not his child?"

"It was, it was, Erdmute! She is above the reach of slander!"

"Look you, Secretary Altorf! You are very hot in the defense of your mistress. But do you think such ladies have a different nature from us poor ordinary women? I am sorry for the Crown-Prince. And it is your fault that you do not rise more rapidly."

"The Crown-Prince is a strange being. I have seen so much of him and know not how to interpret his expressions. Kolbe,

who fawns upon him like a dog and kisses his hands, knows him no better than I do and is frightened each time he is summoned."

A hubbub arose in front of the house below. The innkeeper showed a drunken peasant the door. Rough voices were heard. From the forests of Potsdam blew hither a disconsolate November wind.

★(7)★

DURING this winter the life of Frederic William slowly ebbed away. He would still occasionally have a good day and even drive out, and the populace believed that he might last out the year. But those who were precisely informed knew in the spring that the end was near. The court was already in the throes of the approaching change of sovereigns.

Soon after the new year the Crown-Princely couple moved from Köpenick to Berlin in order that Frederic might be nearer his father at Potsdam. Upon the return from that great journey there had first been an embarrassed tension between father and son. That tension had now eased. The old Elector knew that he would soon be dust and desired no contention. Day after day the Crown-Prince took more vigorously into his hands the reins of power. The companions and Ministers of Frederic William did not always yield with immediate good grace. But he had one who was determined to help him at any cost, and that was General von Schöning. Hence cabals were formed against Schöning and the attempt was even made to incite the Crown-Princess against the dangerous and vengeful general. But Sophie Charlotte, in spite of her youth, was determined to avoid the snares of intrigue unless a vital personal interest of her own was at stake. The rise of Schöning in the Crown-Prince's favor was a daily sharper thorn in the side of the imperial and

Dutch party. How were the great revolutionary plans to succeed—the conquest of England by William of Orange and the campaign against Louis of France, if this tool of the French assumed power in Brandenburg? The Duke of Schomberg grumbled audibly; Eberhard von Danckelmann remained in despair in his rooms. Rébenac was, of course, triumphant. He had always prophesied that in a crisis this State would be true to its French engagements. He himself, alas, could not pluck the fruits of his cleverness. At this decisive time arrived the news of his father's death and of his own appointment to succeed his father as French ambassador at the Spanish court. It was the most important diplomatic mission in the French King's gift. But it had been no mean achievement to keep this strong military State and its Protestant sovereign true to the interests of France. Without Rébenac the banner of the Fleur-de-lys would hardly have waved from the walls of Strassburg.

During Rébenac's last audience with the old Elector his experienced eye saw that the end was near. As Rébenac was entering the Elector's study he met Herr von Fuchs. The Elector had summoned him to Potsdam and had conferred with him for two hours. To him alone, the subtlest of his servitors, he showed at last the plan of the attack against France which he had written out with his own hand. It could thus be properly explained to his successor. The Frenchman naturally found the Elector exhausted from this exertion. In the middle of the room he sat in an armchair in his long dressing-gown and a tall felt cap, his swollen legs and feet upon cushions. In spite of his apparent weakness and inability to discuss great affairs he yet took care to assure the retiring diplomat that his feelings of friendship toward His Majesty, and hence his attitude toward France, had undergone no

change. From Potsdam Rébenac drove back with Herr von Fuchs, and it seemed to him that that false and clever gentleman showed that former devotion to the French cause which recent years had cooled. Reverentially Fuchs heard of the greeting which the old Elector had sent to the King. Rébenac hastened to add that the heir to the throne had expressed similar sentiments. With a certain solemnity he said: "I am glad that my departure sees the sentiment of your exalted house unchanged. That shows that I have at least done no harm. I trust that Herr von Schöning, if any influence be granted him, will follow in my footsteps."

Fuchs stopped first at his house in the city and then drove straight out to his estate at Malchow. He had brought his cook along and supped on a roasted chicken and a bottle of Rhine wine. Afterward he sat smoking and reading the brilliant maxims of the Spanish Jesuit Gracian. He had long loved this book.

It was late when a servant announced that a gentleman insisted on seeing His Excellency. It was a nobleman from Güstrow. At first Fuchs was annoyed, but the word Güstrow gave him pause; he dropped his book and went into the hall. The stranger was, in fact, a page of the court of Mecklenburg who was escorting back to Berlin the Princess Marie Amalia, who was in deep mourning, seeing that her husband of six months' standing had just died of the smallpox. This new misfortune in their family had affected both the Elector and the feeble Dorothea severely. A letter was indited to the old Duke at Güstrow requesting him, immediately after the obsequies, to permit his daughter-in-law to depart, so that the Elector might have all his children about him on his dying bed. Thus it had come about that the seventeen-year-old widow sat in the traveling-carriage at the entrance of the

village and awaited the page's return. The coachman had left Velten far too late, had passed the hunting-lodge of Tegel by darkness, and had then lost his way on the heath. By a wide détour he had come to Malchow.

Fuchs roused the house and himself accompanied the lackeys with lanterns to the carriage. The travelers had not known that so eminent a person lived in the village. The Princess was very glad; the long day's drive had wearied her. The big coach drove up to the manor-house and Fuchs helped Marie Amalia descend. Next to the princess there had been another lady who was introduced to him as Frau von Bellin. In the house he was amazed to find her a beauty and to learn that, without his knowing it, she had long lived at court. It was difficult in this unprepared house and at this late hour to arrange proper quarters and prepare a collation for the guests. Fuchs, who had not many servants at his command here, would have been greatly embarrassed had not Erdmute von Bellin begged for permission to lend her swift and experienced help. Fuchs had spent a great deal of money on Malchow; the house was charmingly furnished and Marie Amalia soon felt herself quite at home. She finally drifted into a mood which hardly harmonized with her recent bereavement; she even related humorous incidents of the day's journey. Suddenly she looked down at her black garb and blushed and soon withdrew to her room.

Thus Herr von Fuchs was left alone in his salon with the blond Frau von Bellin. Both were in a cheerful and confidential mood. The sudden arrival of the guests by night gave the hour a fantastic atmosphere. The beautiful young woman and the gentleman who was no longer young found it as easy to converse as though they had known each other long. They naturally discussed Güstrow and the sudden end of the Prin-

cess's marriage. Unaware they found themselves discussing marriage in general. The statesman let himself go on this curious evening and admitted that he was not happy in his married life. His wife never agreed with him; they were thinking of a separation, ultimately of complete divorce. Fuchs was the first to pronounce that word, and Erdmute, wide-eyed, listened to him with an obvious sympathy that did him good. Then she began to tell of her own lot and tears came into her eyes. Her husband made life unendurable. Upon inquiring, Fuchs discovered that Bellin had for some years been in the army somewhere in Prussia. Erdmute believed that a favorable opportunity had come to her and ventured to ask whether she might not some day hope for a divorce, too. It was not, she was told, out of the question. The consistory always made difficulties, yet divorces were granted from time to time. Moreover, the last court of appeal happened to be the department of the Minister von Fuchs, who presided over the ecclesiastical interests of the country. He inquired after possible grounds. Had Bellin ever threatened his wife? Since he was a coarse fellow it might be possible to represent his outbursts of rage as threats against her life. Herr von Fuchs grew more and more zealous. The parsons were always pig-headed, but the final decision was in the hands of the sovereign. It would be necessary to await the change of rulers and to place the matter at the right moment before the new Elector. Fuchs assured the beautiful and unhappy lady that she could count upon his help. Erdmute listened and observed attentively. His narrow blue eyes regarded her with much more kindness than courtesy demanded. She thanked him and rose and bade him good night and Herr von Fuchs kissed the proffered hand with serious tenderness.

He had to content himself with but a brief sleep. In traveling costume he was ready in the morning to accompany the princess to her destination. On the great terrace of the castle at Berlin the Crown-Prince received his weeping sister and led her to Sophie Charlotte.

★(8)★

A SINGLE cannon-shot fired from the walls into a star-clear night of May saluted the new ruler. He entered his capital in deep mourning. The troops were drawn up and the well-ordered citizenry preserved silence, as it had been bidden.

The long procession with the hearse at its center had left Potsdam at seven o'clock. The family followed two hours later. It was midnight before anyone arrived. The new Elector Frederic left his carriage at a considerable distance outside the gate. All other men had walked the whole way. In the carriages sat only the new and the widowed Electoral Princesses, the ladies of their families, and a few ladies in waiting. An innumerable crowd with wax torches preceded and followed the body of the dead sovereign. The servitors from Potsdam, from the majordomo to the last groom, the officers and the life-guards and the two companies of foot-guards who had been summoned to surround the house in which the Elector was dying, all walked on foot with candles in their hands. Amazement was expressed at the promptness with which this mass of torches had been produced. Some clever head must have planned carefully.

Behind the coffin walked the new Elector through the Berlin streets bright with the light of pitch-fires, his four step-brothers at his side. The youngest of these, the Margrave Christian, who was only ten years old, wept out of weariness

and excitement. From the carriages, too, sobs were audible. At the moment when the procession entered the castle square one loud voice broke the stillness from a high station: *Vivat Fredericus Tertius Elector!* The new Elector raised his head but went straight on. Some one had probably hidden himself in the tower of the cathedral church to break the commanded silence. Perhaps it was a student. The ladies left their carriages at the Spree on the side nearer their rooms. Here, too, rose the gradual ascent that led to the upper stories. The dead Elector had presented sedan-chairs to a number of poor Huguenots that they might earn their bread as public chairmen. These Frenchmen now asked for the honor of carrying the Princesses up to their rooms. Their request was granted. The bier was driven into the court; here sergeants of the life-guards took it upon their shoulders. The Elector and his brother Philip, the Prince of Anhalt, the Landgrave of Hesse and the Field-Marshal Derfflinger and Schomberg followed it. The procession ascended the stairs. At the top the coffin was put down and the dead man lifted out and wrapped in his Electoral robe of white black-dotted ermine. He was laid on a huge bed, the Electoral hat at his head. Beside him were placed the scepter and the insignia of the Order of the Garter; over his lower part they spread the flag of Brandenburg, a crowned red eagle on a yellow field, and the Prussian flag with its black eagle on a field of white. Above the flags were crossed the Electoral sword and the sword of Prussian sovereignty. Now the death-watch was constituted. Ministers of state, generals, and nobles of the household relieved one another every three hours.

At last the young Elector retired to his rooms. He had spent three sleepless days and nights at the couch of the dying man and was thoroughly exhausted. The huge family

were in adjoining rooms in the river wing of the castle. All lay awake and hardly anyone thought of the great man lying dead in the central hall. The widow Dorothea, ill and weary as she was, was conferring with her oldest son. What was Philip to do? His father's will gave him the principality of Halberstadt; to his younger brothers, too, their father had left little territories. The two determined that Philip must request an audience early the next morning and with all brotherly affection demand his immediate proclamation as Prince of Halberstadt before the new Elector had had time to consult his Councilors. Alone, they argued, he would scarcely find the strength to resist the last will of his father.

The soul of the young widowed Princess Marie Amalia was singularly divided between conflicting emotions. She seemed to herself a rather tragic figure. A lady who loses her father six weeks after the death of her husband might well think of herself as cruelly afflicted. Nevertheless, a tiny gleam of light shone into her great sorrow and she had a premonition that her life would take a turn for the better. Two days ago Erdmute von Bellin had given her a letter which had been sent in the care of Herr Altorf, because the sender thereof did not wish to address her at the castle. He was no other than the amiable Duke William Morris von Zeitz, who commended himself to her ladyship's affectionate attention and assured her of his undeviating devotion.

The nineteen-year-old Sophie Charlotte lay in her bed and drank chocolate. With her were her ladies Pöllnitz and Krosigk. She felt safe with Krosigk, who was a good and clever Hanoverian woman. Yet she preferred little Fräulein von Pöllnitz who had some philosophical culture herself. For just fourteen hours Sophie Charlotte had been a sovereign lady and a Princess of the Holy Roman Empire. The long cavalcade

from Potsdam and the solemnity and the torches and the long silence had tried her temper. Now she was merry and her eyes beamed.

"Krosigk, give me another cupful!"

"If Your Serenity desires one!"

"Say it again, dear Krosigk—Your Serenity. What a handsome long word! *Mesdames, 'que c'était embêtant!* I'm afraid our reign is going to be a dreadful bore."

"Does Your Serenity desire more sugar?"

"The sugar is good for my little Crown-Prince. But suppose it's a girl? That would be dreadful. The House of Brandenburg would give me no peace. Look how the coverlet curves, Pöllnitz. *Ne suis-je pas grosse comme un évêque?* Preserve your virtue, dear ladies! The men make monsters of us."

"You will present a philosopher to the throne. The son of Sophie Charlotte must be another Marcus Aurelius."

"Ah, Pöllnitz, I'll be well satisfied if he will but grow up. It did not go well the first two times. And who knows whether philosophy will please him. I know that it makes me happy. Books and music—that's all I need. Good night, my dears. I won't get up before eleven."

In the morning the citizens gathered in the square. Permission had been granted to view the body of the dead ruler. The procession was headed by the senior burgomaster of Berlin, Herr Levine Schardius. Meanwhile the other rooms and corridors of the castle were beginning to swarm with all who were in any way connected with the court. But why were there so many soldiers? It was perceived that whole flights of rooms and corridors were declared closed and guarded by captains and huge musketeers. The new lord was evidently going to exact severe discipline. Stranger things were reported.

People came saying they had not been permitted to leave the city. The gates were all guarded. What was feared? Those who had been in Potsdam the night before had a similar tale to relate. Scarcely had it been known that Frederic William had breathed his last than General von Schöning had ordered all doors to be barred and had summoned all the officers and with drawn sword bidden first them and then their soldiers to take the oath of allegiance to Frederic the Third. Immediately thereafter mounted messengers had dashed to Berlin, so that the garrison of the city had been pledged to Frederic many hours before he had entered his capital.

At ten o'clock in the forenoon everyone was in the castle who had been able to get past the guards. The two inner courts were gay with liveries. The hunters, drummers, coachmen were there in their orange-colored coats and hats with sea-green feathers. The cooks were there and crowds of men and maid servants. This lower world of service had lost its order for a day, not knowing who was in command, lacking the word of a master. The stairs were crowded with chamberlains and officers. Blue, the color of the army of Brandenburg, clashed with the scarlet of the court uniforms. Nearly everyone had covered the bright facings of his costume with veils of crêpe. The time had been too short for the making of mourning cloaks. Upstairs the throng thickened. One trickle of the human stream was diverted through a narrow gallery which passed by the rooms of the Electoral widow. Entrance here was, however, permitted only to the ambassadors of foreign powers and to Ministers of State and generals. For this way led to the great audience and reception chambers. The anterooms were frightfully thronged. Everyone was pushing on toward the alabaster hall.

Here were assembled the dignitaries of the mourning State.

This huge hall was filled, too. It was so arranged that the nobler sort gathered in the center, while the most distinguished of all took up their stand beside the wall that led from door to door. On the other side near the twelve great windows were assembled the army officers, courtiers of various grades, the councilors of the courts of law and the privy-secretaries, the envoys of lesser courts and the pages. In their niches stood the life-sized white-marble statues of the eleven Electors of the family of Hohenzollern. The twelfth niche was still empty. White gleamed this entire chamber, except the ceiling, which glowed with the colors of the fresco paintings. At the end toward the castle square stood the raised throne of the dead ruler under its canopy of carmosine. Not far from the throne stood, in their formal mourning costumes, the highest two dignitaries of the court, Grumbkow, Minister of both War and Finance, and the high chamberlain, Count Dönhoff. A little behind these were gathered the other Ministers of State and the Privy-Councilors. The figure of Franz von Meinders visibly dominated these. How did it come about that he who had for years yielded to the rising star of his rival, Fuchs, had recently carried his head so high again? The youngest page at the court knew that this was due to the influence of Schöning, that Schöning and Meinders were ardent Franco-philés, probably in the pay of the French King, and that, therefore, the new Elector seemed to be definitely orientated toward France.

In the middle of the entire hall a group of high officers surrounded the corpulent and arrogant General Hans Adam von Schöning, who cast about him a challenging glance. He was observed with much suppressed rage. There were few who would not rather have seen Fuchs or even Danckelmann in that pre-eminent position. Yet none could doubt but that

the Elector would immediately entrust Schöning with the chief powers of the State. Among the few papers which the present ruler had already signed was one creating Schöning Lieutenant Field-Marshal and thus raising him above all the other general officers. Discontent, nay, indignation, prevailed. On the first forenoon of his reign Fredric the Third was no favorite at his court.

Under the marble statue of one of the Electors of old stood Frederic William Stosch, observing the great of the land and the people of the court. His thoughts were depressed and the expressions that he saw astonished him. He beheld mourning cloaks and crêpe swathings and black feathers. But any grief over the passing of this monarch who had dominated all these lives he did not see. A low expectancy as to what name the next hour would design as that of a favorite was stamped upon each face. Across from him and near a window Stosch's eye saw a head that seemed turned in his direction, and recognized M. Poussin. The philosophers saluted each other from afar. Poussin, dressed in simple black, stood in a row of officers and minor envoys, although he alone represented the mightiest of earth's rulers here today, Rébenac having left and the new ambassador, Gravel, not being expected for some weeks. Yet precisely now it was important to the French Secretary of State to have a thoroughly initiated representative at the court of Brandenburg. Now or never certain people had to be bribed. Poussin loathed this activity. Immediately on the arrival of M. de Gravel he determined to abandon not only this city, but the dirty and cynical trade of a diplomat.

There was a stir in the hall. The ambassador Baron Fridag was coming over to pay his respects to the new Field-Marshal von Schöning. He was almost obsequious. The sight confirmed

Poussin in his opinion that the Germans had much arrogance but little true self-esteem. How could the Austrian so openly bow down to the chief of the French party? Had Rébenac been here Fridag would not have dared to do this nor would Schöning have dared to accept the jeweled sword which the imperial ambassador had sent him yesterday. The stingy Viennese court had suddenly grown strangely generous. Yet Poussin was not wholly discouraged. The robust stomach of Schöning could easily digest a meal from Vienna without forgetting the more nourishing and constant table of the French. Involuntarily Poussin looked for Fuchs. The triumph of Schöning must be a cruel blow to the head of the Austrian party. At last Poussin discovered his man not three paces from Schöning himself. Apparently conquered was the mighty intrigue between Brandenburg, the Emperor, and the Dutch by means of which Fuchs had expected to become the leading statesman of his country. Now were he and Schomberg and Danckelmann all shadows and equally fantastic had become that fabled coalition against France and the mad expedition to England. The new Elector would be an even better ally of the King than his father had been. Rébenac's prophecies had been correct.

Near the folding-door beside the throne a man stood all alone. He stood erect and held his head very high. All who came or went looked at him; none approached him. What would it avail to waste oneself on fallen greatness? Eberhardt von Danckelmann stared at the painted ceiling. He deigned not to look at any. Yet whom did he deceive? All knew that ambition had consumed his very soul. Now he was forty-five and as powerless as when he had been the little Prince's tutor. All the years he had lived for this hour, and now there was none so low as to do him reverence. A quarter

of a century he had devoted to this Frederic, bringing him up, fortifying him for life, working over his feeble body and mediocre mind with infinite patience and trouble. It had been like building a house on a swamp. At last the house stood firm and the builder was shown the door.

In a little side-room stood talking with careworn expressions the young Lieutenant-Colonel Christoph Dohna and the councilor of the legation Johann Besser. They had agreed to meet here every hour to exchange whatever news they had gathered in the great audience chambers. Besser had never had much luck in Berlin. Fuchs was his enemy. Had he closed an eye and sold his wife to the Minister of State, he would probably have risen. And now his one great friend, namely Danckelmann, was in obvious disgrace.

Count Christoph Dohna was equally cast down, but for quite another reason. He was no adherent of the proud and arrogant councilor Danckelmann; Schöning, the new favorite, was his enemy. For the third time today the two friends had met here, each time with diminished hopes. It was not surprising that they ended by irritating each other.

"Did you see," said Dohna, "that the Pole is here who used always to be with the Margrave Ludwig? He has arrived again. He probably desires the rich widow for that cripple of a Polish Crown-Prince. What was the fellow's name?"

"'Tis the Starost Byelinski. If you forget names so easily, you'd better get three pennies' worth of Ambra powder from the apothecary; it strengthens the memory. And I tell you I don't give a bloody damn whether that blond Radziwill goes to bed with one man rather than another."

"Don't be so coarse. 'Tis not my fault that your Danckelmann is a failure."

"Sorry, Dohna! I'm feeling very low indeed; I have wife and child and where am I to go?"

"We shall all have to leave, Besser. There's no place here for any but the low-born. My nobility is not made of paper like that of Herr Meinders. The Dohnas are as good as the Counts von Zollern."

"Sir, what do you mean by low-born? I have run my sword through more than one arrogant youngster."

"Sorry, Besser! I would not wound a friend. But 'tis true that merit is not regarded here, else so dishonorable a fellow as Schöning could not rise so high."

"Aye, he can cheat a Jew. But where will you go?"

"There's no place for me but Holland. Yet I like not the thought. Prince William is a great man, but with peculiar inclinations. He receives young gentlemen only to debauch them."

"So he is a Sodomite? Silence! Who comes here?"

A very tall officer entered the little room. It was Lord Leven, the Scotchman who represented the Prince of Orange. The two young men looked at him expectantly; he had influence in high places.

"Good day, my lord!" cried Besser. "You are late. Luckily the Elector is still abed."

"An error, monsieur! His Serenity has been dressed these three hours."

"Not possible! And no one is admitted? It pleases him to work alone?"

"How remarkable! Have you seen Kolbe?"

"Herr von Kolbe has been with him since nine o'clock."

"Pardon me, messieurs. I must deliver a message to General von Barfus."

"I should be happy, my lord, to have you dine with us."

My wife, as you know, has been partial to you ever since Köpenick."

"I am obliged to madame and to you. Unfortunately, I leave within the hour; I shall knock at your door on my return."

When he was gone, Besser growled:

"How tongue-tied the Scotchman is! The order to Barfus must have been from the Elector. Did he himself have an audience, I wonder? He can't start so suddenly for Holland. Curious!"

"And what was that about the Chevalier von Kolbe?"

"I knew that Kolbe had been with him a great deal during the last weeks."

"Oh, it has been going on for months."

"Truly? Do you know him well?"

"Kolbe? Very well. Two months ago at Frau von Grumbkow's he lost eighty ducats to me in the most gentlemanly manner."

"Does he pay court to her, too? They say he is lecherous as a Turk and sleeps with women of forty if he can do no better. But hold! Danckelmann said to me the other day that Kolbe was a very skillful and useful person."

"That is true. He is very able."

"Ah, I seem to see a light. When an old Puritan like Danckelmann, who works seventeen hours a day and has never loved any but his ugly old woman, says of such an idler and debauchée that he is useful—then there is something between them!"

"What do you mean?"

"I breathe again, Dohna! Schöning is not all powerful yet. Let us go in, but separately. We need not be seen together."

Just as Besser was entering the great hall under the marble statue of the Elector Albrecht Achilles, a whisper was heard, "*Messieurs les cadets!*" Between the rows of bowing courtiers walked the four young Margraves, conducted to their seats by Count Dönhoff. Rage was written on the face of Prince Philip, the eldest of the four; his cheek burned as though he had been struck. The reason was not unknown. An hour ago he had asked for an audience. The Elector had refused and sent the command that his four brothers were to appear before him together later.

The presence of the princes raised expectancy to the highest pitch. Yet nothing happened. The twelve strokes of noon rang from the cathedral church. How long would the new lord remain idly in his chamber? The business of the State, of the court, the arrangements for the mourning ceremonies—all lagged and stood still. Suddenly, from the corridor that led to the chambers of the all-highest there slipped a little gray-haired man. This was Kornmesser, the old Elector's body-servant, who, as the entire court knew, had immediately been taken into the son's confidence and had sealed his dead master's desk under the Elector's eyes. The old man walked slowly from one end of the hall to the other, regarding everyone with a look at once modest and sly. Having made this inspection, he disappeared behind the throne. Immediately thereafter, carrying his black-plumed hat under his arm, Herr von Kolbe entered slowly and solemnly. Under his formal mourning cloak he wore the uniform of a high chamberlain of Brandenburg. No one had known that he had been appointed to this rank. With great dignity and courtesy he bowed first to the four princes, then to Dönhoff, Grumbkow, Meinders, General Schöning, and Herr von Fuchs, adjusting his gesture nicely to the dignity of each. Without haste he traversed the

long hall to the entrance at the other end, where stood the stubborn figure of Eberhardt von Danckelmann. Here he bowed nearly to the ground. Raising himself up, he said for all to hear:

“His Serenity commands monsieur to come to him at once!”

PART THREE



★(1)★

THAT spring the Rhine had been swollen. Navigation was dangerous and the Dutch boatmen had to wait in the harbor cities. The town of Emmerich was crowded with them.

Though Rickers, the innkeeper, never let anyone know that he had money in his strong-box, satisfaction was visible on his face. The inn was crowded from morning till midnight. All his old Dutch shipmates gathered here. The youngsters came, too, on account of his daughters.

The blond Katie was not yet sixteen and the younger one fourteen. But both would not refuse to do a good fellow a favor in the cellar. The father knew nothing or pretended not to know. He kept saying that they would be stupid wenches to throw themselves away on common fellows, since each was handsome enough for a gentleman. Katherine was the handsomer. There was no shipman between Dordrecht and Cologne but had heard of Katie Rickers.

There were other guests present, much to the river men's annoyance. There was a Scotch Lord Leven, for instance, who was commissioned by the young Elector to gather his exiled countrymen in the Rhineland into a regiment. The money for this purpose must have come from Holland, whither Lord Leven would probably take his soldiers, too. The Dutch, as everyone was saying, were going forth to conquer England. Leven let Germans enlist, too, and, if they were tall enough,

dressed them in the Scotch uniforms. 'Twas these enlisted fellows who sat in the inn all day.

The river men liked no better the fat distinguished gentleman who had been coming into the taproom for more than a week. What business had he here with his coffee-brown, silver-buttoned coat and lace-edged collar? Yet they knew well enough what he was after. He had a weakness for the older wench. A red-bearded Hollander, who shared that weakness, had offered to beat the fat gentleman. But old Rickers, who could throttle a bulldog with his naked hands, gently pressed the old ruffian's nose against the table so that a little pool of blood stood on the wood. Rickers, in fact, was damnably obsequious to the fat gentleman, who was a distinguished person from the Berlin court and was called M. Biedekap. He had been in Kleve on Electoral business and had seen Katherine Rickers on his way back at Emmerich. He lingered for her sake.

The slender blond girl disliked the fat man, in spite of the handsome presents he gave, such as a silken shawl and a bracelet. In his traveling-coach in the city he had boxes full of gear. The new Elector, whose head body-servant Biedekap was, had sent him to the Rhine to fetch back things from the castle at Kleve to Berlin. Biedekap had found much of which no record existed. Just once in the very early morning he had robbed Katie of a little kiss. That was all. He seethed, for he was in haste. He had already caused an apothecary to notify his master that he had fallen ill at Emmerich. But he could not delay much longer and he desired the girl most mightily.

Near the inn and among the boats there had been observed for many months a ragged old fellow with but one ear. He spoke high German and no honest Netherlander understood him. The rich river men would give him a farthing when they

were in good humor; many a one, on the other hand, would give him a kick as a warning not to go pilfering among the boats. The Suabian was not permitted in the taproom at all. Rickers had publicly kicked him out more than once. The slyer kind knew very well, however, that the one-eared man and the innkeeper were very good friends. For the smugglers stored their wares at the inn and the Suabian was the watchman by night who gave them the sign to approach. From the start he was very serviceable to Herr Bidekap and told him many things about the Rickers girls that might be useful to the fat man. He assured him that nothing was to be gained from the innkeeper without money. For money enough, however, he would sell anything.

Bidekap offered twenty thaler for a night with Katie. Katie refused and her father boxed her ears soundly. In his righteous wrath the old man gradually learned the secret of his daughter's high and mightiness. She was always running to see the half-starved schoolmaster who had been occupying a little attic room for several weeks. Rickers had taken him in out of sheer pity, to hide him from the parsons who were after his life. Rickers had saved many an honest fellow from the gallows before this. Moreover, he was glad to play a trick on the Emmerich parson, who was reported to have preached against smuggling innkeepers and their whorish daughters. The schoolmaster who had naught but the shabby brown coat on his lean body and a ragged portmanteau full of printed matter, yet possessed a few guilders to pay for the wretched room and a bit of bread. For Father Rickers gave nothing without pay.

But what an extraordinary tongue the little man had! He talked and one felt warm all over. Even the younger girl, who was still stupid, listened to him until she heard her father

roar concerning the sloth of worthless wenches. But Katie paid no attention to her father and sat for hours upstairs with Matthias. Never had anyone spoken to her such words as his. The white-haired man had been driven from his village school again for inciting the peasantry against the parsons and for throwing pamphlets into the churches. They were hot after him. He would have been in irons now but for the hiding place at Rickers's.

The innkeeper waxed more and more indignant. If Biedekap was willing to put down twenty good thaler to have his will of the girl 'twas godless to rob a poor father of the money. She had given herself cheaper many a time and oft; so much was sure. By night Rickers stood with the one-eared man and complained of the wicked pride which the ragamuffin schoolmaster instilled into his daughters. Of course, he could inform the beadle. But in the first place Rickers didn't want the reputation of an informer nor did he wish the constables to sneak into his house. But he was eager to get rid of the fellow. The one-eared man said he was sure that he had met the schoolmaster before. He knew not where or when. He had caught a glimpse of that brown coat and those glowing eyes on the stairs the other day. But he had met many in the forty years that he had lain in inns and gaols. If he could hear the man's voice! So Rickers and the Suabian mounted a ladder at the back of the house and climbed up to the attic window of the little room where, as each night, Katie sat talking to the schoolmaster.

"Matthias, can you explain me this? The parson says one must obey one's father. And he says, further, that one must lie with no man unless one is wedded to him. But my father beats me to make me sleep with old Biedekap and earn him

the money. Do I break the Ten Commandments if I obey or if I resist?"

"Clever woman! There thou seest the wisdom of the Bible. Ask the parson; 'tis his business!"

"The parson will not see me. He says we are whores."

"The liar!"

"Nay, Matthias, he is right. What else could I be? My mother must ha' been one, too."

"Did I not tell thee, Katie, that our great Mother Nature distinguisheth not between the wed and the unwed. When thy own mother bore thee she was like the wife of a king."

"Do you believe, Matthias, that I am good enough for a king?"

"A king is naught but a man and thou art good enough for any. There are no differences among men. 'Tis the parsons have invented them."

"What are poor folk to do? The world will never be ruled by reason, as you say it will. Men come into this house to put their hands on us. Were we to act the ladies, we would all starve."

"Abuse not reason, Katie. Thou hast a good head and wilt make thy way in the world."

"Know you of any wiser thing for me than to make the fellows mad for me? Good night, Matthias!"

The shawl slipped from her shoulders and her bosom was uncovered. It had happened before. She wondered whether the schoolmaster's fingers were as lecherous as other men's. He only looked reflectively upon the lovely bosom and the blond head. The girl blushed and kissed the old man's hand.

The one-eared rogue had long descended from the ladder. Now he knew. Two years ago, when he had been in gaol in Berlin, the mad schoolmaster, accused of frightful rebellion

against the Elector, had lain there, too. The turnkey had been bribed and the fellow had escaped. It was clear to Rickers that he must not harbor so dangerous a criminal. The Suabian could run to Herr Biedekap in the morning. The latter might talk to the arrogant folk in the town-hall.

At ten o'clock Biedekap entered the taproom. He seemed amused and expectant. Katie grew suspicious. She saw the Suabian near the door and, looking out, saw the parson approaching the ill-famed inn. She saw through everything at once. "Thou wouldst betray Matthias!" she cried to her father behind the bar. Swiftly she turned: "Fellows, whoever is honest will help Katie. Scoundrels are here!" The men jumped up. Seven strong shipmen and four soldiers with the Scotch colors in their hats. They threw their pewter mugs upon the table. Katie turned fiercely upon Herr Biedekap: "Monsieur, I took you for an honest man and you're but a rogue! Never will you have me. I'll jump into the Rhine first!"

The pastor was rubbing his hands. He looked forward to seeing the wretch clapped into irons who had said that the parsons must be driven out of the world. But suddenly the one-eared vagabond was drawn from within into the house. When the constables came running they found the door locked. They thundered against it with their irons. At last the Suabian opened. They had latched the door to prevent the rogue from escaping. But he had smelled a rat and scrambled down a ladder at the back of the house and was gone.

The parson knew not what to think. Nor was it long until the door opened again and a brawling crowd raced down toward the river. In the middle of the crowd was Katie, leading some one hidden in a long blue woman's coat. The parson made as though to follow, and had bare steel thrust under his nose. One raced ahead of the others and loosened a boat,

and the person in the blue cloak sprang in and was rowed out into the river toward Holland.

Toward evening Katie went to see Herr Biedekap. He conducted her to his room, where sweets and Hungarian wine were ready. The conversation was very elegant. Biedekap remembered that forenoon. Gradually he grew bolder and put his arm about the girl. But when he would have proceeded farther she withdrew herself and said very gently:

"Monsieur, I gave you my word today that I would visit you in your room and I have kept my word. If you expected more, 'twas not my fault. But lest you think that you are cheated, I stole the twenty thaler from my father's strong-box, and bring them to you. I may give myself away, but I am not for sale. Thus did my friend Matthias teach me."

Nevertheless, Katie did not go away on that evening, and in the morning Biedekap swore that he would never give her up again. The parson was mightily astonished when, after all that had happened, the stout gentleman appeared before him with the innkeeper's daughter and demanded that he marry them. The bride entered the church with a wreath in her blond hair, and though the parson nearly burst with rage, he dared say nothing because the congregation consisted of river men and drunken soldiers with long knives. The newly married couple entered the Electoral coach and sat merrily on the feed-sacks. Biedekap bade the coachman travel very slowly because in all his fifty years he had not been so happy. This pleasant time lasted until they got to Münster, where he got rather drunk. Late at night someone plucked him by the sleeve and led him to his chamber, where his wife lay abed with a young chamberlain of the Bishop of Münster. Had he been less drunk and noisy, his ears would not have been boxed.

In Berlin there was much merriment among the servants of

the castle when Father Biedekap arrived with so young a wife. It was not long before it was known that the blond Katherine was not only pretty and clever, but not in the least cruel. She had already several favorites when one day she met a very distinguished gentleman in the public park. She stood between the tulip-beds, regarding the recumbent statue of Neptune, when this very magnificent gentleman approached her and gallantly asked why the envious god of the sea had not sent the loveliest of his blond Nereids before. Katie did not understand this, but she smiled agreeably and followed the elegant gentleman to the quiet gardens by the Spree. The gentleman was none other than Herr von Kolbe, the Elector's closest friend.

No sooner had Kasimir von Kolbe become really acquainted with the young Rhenish woman than he determined, like Biedekap before him, not to give her up again. He was now himself a man of mature years desirous of a female presence, yet weary of constant new complications. This liaison interfered with nothing. He did not dream of marrying, having seen too much of family intrigue and female enmity among his colleagues and in the very house of the Elector. Katherine delighted him and never bored him. He could discuss everything with her, for though she had no education she had a good understanding and subtle intuitions.

Herr von Kolbe had no intention, of course, of sharing his mistress with a *valet de chambre*. Various advantages were offered to Biedekap, who became merely Katherine's landlord and grew very prosperous.

★(2)★

NEAR a pinegrove not far from the city the secretaries Stosch and Thomas Altorf awaited an approaching carriage. It was their friend Poussin who was leaving Berlin. Although the new ambassador had arrived, Poussin had been asked to assist in a matter which had succeeded so ill that his departure was precipitate.

It had to do with the widow of the Margrave Ludwig. She refused stubbornly to marry the handsome Prince Philip, and so the Brandenburg court determined she should not marry at all. A marriage with a Palatinate Prince had been hitherto prevented to the general amusement of Europe. The Poles naturally desired the contiguous Lithuanian lands and sent their king's son, James Sobieski, to woo the Princess. France favored this union. The Prince Sobieski was introduced into Berlin and the Palace disguised as a lackey. During the second night thereafter some one was caught leaving the Princess's rooms. It was not the Polish Prince, but Poussin, who had persuaded the stupid woman to sign an agreement to marry Sobieski and to endow him with her estates. The Elector was furious and an order of expulsion was issued against Poussin.

M. Poussin descended from his carriage and shook hands with his friends.

"You do me too much honor, messieurs!"

"Ah, Poussin, that was a master-stroke of yours. But you should not have been caught."

"You are quite right. But a philosopher should not drive the detestable trade of diplomacy. Gravel begged me to aid him in this initial success. I am glad that my father left me a few sous; I shall buy me a garden near Paris and read a little and write a little. 'Tis the best a man can do today."

"I shall do the same," said Stosch. "I shall resign from the service and finish my book."

"I am looking forward to it. But I bid you make haste, messieurs, for shortly Mars will roar and Minerva be silent."

"Are you prophesying war?"

"I am sorry, my friends, but I smell powder in the air. If the accursed Dutchman goes to England and the Elector helps him, the French armies will march without declaration of war and Germany will be torn to pieces."

"Are you sure?"

"Is not Danckelmann Prime Minister? He does the bidding of a Prince of Orange. The great State of Frederic William will be sacrificed to the Dutchman."

"M. Poussin, think of your Paris garden."

"You are right. Reasonable beings should have nothing to do with politics. Write to me Stosch, and you too, Altorf! I shall not fail to answer!"

The two friends returned to the city. When they reached the Leipzig gate Stosch said:

"Poussin is no bad diplomat for a philosopher. He is probably right; it smells of powder."

At that same hour the Elector was working in his study. He found it difficult to master his thoughts and his eyes turned from the papers before him to the river beyond the window. Many things vexed him.

The Electoral Princess resisted the new court ceremonial which he was introducing. And because she was pregnant in her last months and so much depended on her health and good-humor, she had to be given her will. She refused utterly to receive the great ladies of the court at her bedside in the morning, as the queen did in Versailles. She said it bored her and she preferred to have Pöllnitz read to her. But Frederic was determined that this should not go on and that the simple habits of his father must finally yield to the etiquette befitting a great court.

He arose at four, yet was the day too short. There were too many things that required his attention. His desk was even covered with samples for the new liveries that were to replace the absurd ones now used in the castle.

He had never thought that the affairs of government would be so tiresome. His father had made the great mistake of causing everything to be brought to his personal attention. It was this system that needed to be changed. But Danckelmann had so little flexibility. The sovereign should give only general orders to be executed by his servants. Thus he was at the same time satisfied and dissatisfied with his chief Minister. Danckelmann had a marvelous head, but he was too rigid. The Elector had first thought that he would discharge all of his father's Ministers. Danckelmann had counseled against this, too. They were his enemies, but they knew the routine business of their departments.

The Elector rang and commanded that Herr von Kolbe be summoned. He needed the man to encourage and cheer him. Kolbe appeared almost at once.

"Ah, there thou art! What did I commission thee to do yesterday? My head is spinning! Everything comes to this table. 'Tis a difficult métier."

The chamberlain said in his soothing voice:

"Your Serenity looks pale. Command the carriage! The weather is fine."

"Let be, dear Kolbe! There are too many pressing matters and the antechamber is full of people. What was it that I asked you to inquire?"

"Perhaps it was about the engraver of medals, Faltz?"

"Quite right!"

"He is a man about thirty, a native of Sweden, but obtained his training as a painter and goldsmith in France and Holland. His reputation is already high; he will not be cheap."

"His medals please me. I would have that art cultivated here. Let it be inquired on what conditions he will come."

Before Kolbe was dismissed the Austrian ambassador was announced. It did not escape Kolbe's observation that the Elector winced. Since the Emperor's representative had precedence over all others in the antechamber he was admitted at once. Since the beginning of Frederic's reign Fridag had already had four or five audiences without once mentioning the terrible matter concerning which they both knew. He had always been so reverential that Frederic's embarrassed terror had gradually yielded. He had, therefore, come to persuade himself that Vienna did not intend to insist upon the secret agreement. The Emperor was minded either to wait or even to let the dust silently gather on the accursed document. At least for this summer Frederic believed himself safe and autumn would bring into the world nothing less than a great war.

When Herr von Fridag entered the Elector was standing beside his armchair; his brown velvet coat with the broad golden piping fell straight to the knee. Under the new reign the deep precise bow of French etiquette had been introduced.

Of this Fridag was past master. The Elector shook hands with the ambassador, sat down on his high chair, and bade the other be seated. He looked into Fridag's eyes and felt disquieted. During his timid boyhood he had taught himself to develop a sharp instinct for the expression in people's eyes. Contrary to his custom, Fridag did not begin by expressing the Emperor's wishes for His Serenity's welfare, but ventured at once to ask whether the Elector approved of the betrothal of his sister-in-law to this so-called Prince of Poland. Frederic flushed at the suggestion that the Prince was an imposter, but pride forbade him to interrupt. Fridag continued in an unaccustomed manner; his voice was hoarse and loud. Once more Frederic controlled his vexation and Fridag saw that he must become even more acrid. The Emperor, he declared, would be much offended by such a betrothal, seeing that His Majesty's palatinate brother-in-law was a suitor for the lady's hand. The Emperor could surely count on some regard for his wishes from all the princes of the Empire. To place the Elector of Brandenburg and Prussia on a level with the sovereigns of dozens of principalities was a poisonous stab that did its work.

"I am a sovereign, sir," Frederic said, angrily. "The Emperor is mightier than I, but not above me. I must request you to take your complaint to the appropriate Ministry."

He nodded, but did not arise. Herr von Fridag arose.

"Your Serenity's displeasure saddens me, but 'tis not all that I have to bear. My master, too, will be excessively angry concerning this betrothal. And I have already been sharply reprimanded concerning my delay in a more vital matter. I will therefore place the treaty concerning Schwiebus before Herr von Danckelmann."

"What is it that you say?"

"Your Serenity will not have forgotten the agreement which you so graciously signed prior to your accession according to which you obligated yourself to restore to the Emperor the territory of Schwiebus."

At first the Elector said nothing. He observed that the man in front of him was calm.

"Did the agreement provide for the immediate cession of the territory? Am I to be given no time at all?"

"I forwarded the paper to Vienna. Since immediate cession is demanded, the treaty must contain that provision. Does not Your Serenity possess a copy?"

Frederic bent forward on his high chair.

"The Jesuit who visited me at Köpenick gave me the document at the last moment. I intended to have a copy made, but trusted none to make it. A copy should have been given me."

"An inexplicable oversight on the part of Father Wolff! Shall I conferr with Herr von Danckelmann?"

"Under no circumstances! You are to mention the matter to no one! I must have time to make the necessary arrangements."

"If only it were not for this wretched betrothal. Vienna will recall me; I am even now reputed to be a tool of the Brandenburg government. If another occupies my position, he will present that agreement publicly and noisily."

The ambassador's tone had changed and was gentle and sorrowful.

"How can the Emperor blame me? The Radziwill is not of my blood. She may marry whom she will. I gave her not to the Pole."

"One should have awaited for the arrival of the Count Palatine in person. As governor of the Tyrol he had to ask

for leave of absence before he could depart from Innsbruck. He is now on his way. But the Poles got wind of that fact and therefore smuggled Sobieski in. What am I to do? If I send messengers bidding the Count turn back, I may as well pack my luggage on the instant. If I do it not and the Count arrives and is covered with ridicule, I am in even worse case. Does Your Serenity see a way out?"

The Elector reflected for a long time.

"Let him come, at all events. He is supposed primarily to visit me, as is but just. He will not sneak in disguised as a lackey like the other?"

"Nay, His Highness is not like the wild Pollack. He travels as befits his station. He is also accustomed to success with ladies."

"All the better. So soon as he comes he shall be invited to the family table; he will meet the Princess. She will not be introduced as anyone's betrothed. The formalities have been superficial. What have I to do with it? If she likes she can tell the Count Palatine herself."

"By your wise decision you relieve me of a terrible and dangerous embarrassment."

"We shall see, then, whether the Innsbruck gentleman has his accustomed success. Keep his coming a secret until he arrives."

When Baron von Fridag returned through the great ante-chamber he saw Prince Anhalt. The ambassador whispered into the Field-Marshal's ear that the one thing which His Serenity could not bear to hear was the word Schwiebus. Anhalt, who had dragged his nephew into this evil business, accepted the warning and disappeared at once.

★(3)★

TOWARD the end of her pregnancy Sophie Charlotte had withdrawn wholly from the life of the court to her own rooms. The innumerable stiff ceremonies of the early months had tried her dreadfully. She wrote to her mamma that the boredom of the life of an Electoral Princess was indescribable. Her husband seemed insatiable of ovations. If it diverted the Elector to hear long speeches and receive oaths of fealty and let the fountains spout wine for the gullets of the vulgar—it did not divert her. During the final month, at all events, she would neither appear at the formal table nor receive anyone. The Berlin castle was just bearable with Pöllnitz, who brought her all the news and never bored her. Her little sister-in-law, Marie Amalia, came to see her often. The Princess Ludwig used to come. But she was really too stupid and too lustful after men. And now this silly betrothal to the Pollack! Sophie Charlotte recounted the affair in a long letter to her mother. She had worked at this little literary masterpiece until four o'clock in the morning, and Frau Justine Siegemund, catching her at it, had scolded her soundly.

It was vexatious that everybody expected a prince. She herself would much have preferred a daughter. In her own family all the men were hard-hearted and coarse-minded; the women alone had any delicacy. She fancied herself at the cradle of a little princess who would inherit the taste for

philosophy from her mother and her grandmother. Her husband, of course, dreamed of a son. The ceremonial for the birth of a crown-prince had long been rehearsed to its minutest details. He would of course be christened Frederic William after his exalted grandfather.

The young widow, Marie Amalia, regarded her sister-in-law's figure with beseeching eyes. "You must have a prince, Lottie, otherwise Frederic will be too unhappy!" And Justine Siegemund, when at last she was permitted to examine the exalted body, withdrew her hand with a radiant face: "Your Serenity, he is lying just right with the little head forward." How could the woman know that it was a he? But the woman inspired confidence in the mind of the Princess, who was not yet twenty and pregnant for the third time.

It was old Frederic William, desiring to possess the best of everything, who had brought Frau Siegemund to Berlin from Silesia and formally appointed her Electoral court midwife. Frau Siegemund, a majestic lady of fifty, had enemies in plenty. But her reputation as the best midwife in Germany and the adjacent countries did not decline. She was summoned to the childbed of exalted ladies in both Holland and Denmark. Two reproaches were addressed to her. She had herself never borne a child. How was she to know the feelings of a woman in labor? Her second offense was literary. Justine, the daughter of a parson in Jauer, knew how to handle a pen and recorded her obstetrical experiences for the use of humanity. She intended to make a book thereof. It was reasoned that a blue-stockings could be of no good at the bedside of an expectant mother. Far to be preferred were the honest old midwives who could neither read nor write, who had no trained head but an experienced womb. Justine Siegemund had her answer ready. She asserted that in these enlightened

times obstetrical science had attained fixed principles and that under the rough and ready empirical fumbling of your ordinary midwife both mothers and babies died like flies. If the midwives did not learn their business better, the time would come when people would summon academically trained physicians to women in childbirth, as was even now unluckily being done in France. And 'twas a swinish and un-Christian thing to have men put their hands on pregnant women.

Daily before noon the Elector visited his wife, and usually found her in good humor. She played the part of the strong-minded lady and discussed her condition without embarrassment. She made game of Marie Amalia, saying that since she had been widowed only four months, she might let Frau Siegemund examine her, too. Often Erdmute von Bellin accompanied Marie Amalia, but it did not escape the Elector's wife that the friendship between those two was less affectionate. Pöllnitz discovered the reason. That old rake, the Minister von Fuchs, payed violent court to the lovely Erdmute in society, and she did not repulse him definitely enough. Pöllnitz knew more than that. Frau von Bellin had long had a steady admirer. 'Twas the dark, handsome Secretary Altorf, and the Princess had favored and protected this liaison because Erdmute's marriage was such a wretched one. But the young daughter of Frederic William had all the pride of her house and did not wish her friend to be accused of inconstancy and looseness.

Sophie Charlotte carried on wise conversations with Justine Siegemund. She asked at which month the soul enters into the child and whether it proceeds from the man or the woman.

"The soul comes from God."

"Very true, Justine; so does our nourishment come from God, but He doesn't cook the dinner. He always uses human

beings as his means. Now it is my opinion that the soul proceeds from the mother."

"I never heard that, Your Serenity."

"If men had anything to do with the soul it would have to be present at the moment of conception; yet you told me that before the fifth month the child was not really human."

"Madame should go to sleep now."

"Siegemund, don't vex me! I desire to profit by this occasion. You ought to know how a human being develops. Think not that I intend to be in labor every year; I will not have a dozen brats hanging to my skirts like the ancient Brandenburg Princesses!"

"You should cultivate tranquil and comfortable thoughts which nourish the child and make for an easy delivery."

"My mother has had many children and is the cleverest woman in Europe and doesn't believe in the soul at all. She says it is an invention imposed on the vulgar."

"Madame should not make such speeches in her condition; they are not pleasing to God."

"Ah, God! He torments us women, and the men have all the pleasure. Why can't we have children the way a tree bears apples? It seems that God cannot manage without midwives. You are a reasonable woman, Justine, and I like that. I would rather depend on good sense than on piety. You may go now and send Apelt with her bitter tea."

A few days later Justine and her assistant, Frau Apelt, set up the bed for labor. It had a good back to lean against and special rests for the feet and many other devices, and had been constructed according to Justine's design. On the same evening Sophie Charlotte sat with her ladies in the drawing-room. There had been music, but it tired her to sit at the keyboard. Krosigk was to read from the *Mercure Gallant*, but

soon her French was too much for Sophie Charlotte's ears. Marie Amalia, who had her lute with her, was asked to sing. But she choked, having again received a message from the Duke of Zeitz. Everyone looked at Erdmute, who then sang a little song by the Breslau poet, Christian Hofmann:

“Was I not queen?
The hand of love
Clad me in silken sheen!
No more I see thereof,
But bitter teen
And weeping now . . .”

In a voice failing with emotion Marie Amalia said, “Thank you, Mutchen!” and embraced her friend with all the old tenderness. Sophie Charlotte was amazed.

“What ails you women? Are you suffering the pangs of love? I thought there was no virgin here except poor Krosigk! *Moi, j’abhorre ces messieurs.*”

Fräulein von Pöllnitz came in with a peculiar expression in her eyes. Her mistress observed it at once.

“You know something, Pöllnitz! Out with it!”

The news was this. Two hours ago the Count Palatine and governor of the Tyrol had arrived with four coaches and out-riders and had taken up lodging at the house of General Derfflinger. The whole town knew already that the Count was a handsome gentleman, quite unlike the homely Sobieski. It was evident what he wanted in Berlin and Sophie Charlotte promised herself much amusement.

Next day the Count Palatine visited the castle. At dinner there were present only the members of the family, Danckelmann and Fridag. The Elector sat between the Princess Ludwig and the Emperor's brother-in-law. On the following morning the Count invited the Princess Ludwig to take a drive

with him and she could not well refuse. During a promenade in the garden Frederic stopped the Starost Byelinski and said, jestingly, "*Mon cher, prenez garde!*" On the fourth day of the Count's visit it was learned that the Princess Ludwig, when the Palatinate Prince came for her after church-time again, had had a violent altercation with Byelinski in Polish. Returning from the drive, she locked herself in. Her chief lady in waiting assured Pöllnitz that she was already head over heels in love with the Count.

The affair now ran its course rapidly. At ten on Monday morning the Count appeared again. The Princess Ludwig accompanied him and did not return. All that could be discovered was that the couple had driven to the house of the Austrian ambassador and was still there. The Elector sent old Grumbkow, whom Fridag begged to step softly because the exalted couple was resting abovestairs. The course of events had been very simple. When the Count Palatine and the widowed Princess had arrived in Fridag's study his house chaplain had already been there and had joined the Protestant Princess and the Catholic Prince in matrimony. But the Count was cleverer than the Pole, who had let his greed for lands and contracts betray him. He gave the bride barely time to partake of the collation which Fridag had ordered, but immediately withdrew in her company into another chamber to consummate the marriage. Then no one could dispute him the possession of her person or her estates.

The Polish embassy raised a murderous outcry; the French embassy was in despair and rage. Rébenac's unhappy successor, Gravel, appeared early at the castle and begged for an audience. He had the audacity to accuse the Elector of having participated in the plot. This gave Frederic the opening to be extremely dignified and to declare that one

must not, on account of a trifle like this, endanger the renewed alliance with France. Evil experiences persuaded him, he added, to withdraw himself from Holland and the Emperor; he was as Francophile at heart as his father had been before him.

At this very hour Paul von Fuchs at his estate of Machow sat in conference with the taciturn Lord Leven in order to consummate unobserved a great historical event—the Germanic coalition against France. For the English expedition of William of Orange was not possible unless the might of Brandenburg would protect Holland against French attack. To this plan Frederic had agreed. Those regiments of his that were to accompany William to England were already picked; 25,000 additional troops were to be stationed along a line running from Cologne to Arnheim.

The Elector, feigning to be vexed, expressed his displeasure to the newly married couple and bade them leave his dominions. Hence two days later an elegant traveling coach, the first present of the Radziwill to her second husband, passed through the Leipzig gate on the long journey to Innsbruck at the very hour when the noise of many cannon and the jubilation of the populace announced the news that Frederic William, Crown Prince of Brandenburg, had been born.

The great dignitaries of the State assembled in the antechamber of their sovereign. They were told that the exalted lady's delivery had been an easy one. The Electoral Princess had fallen into a healthy slumber and awakened cheerfully toward noon. The gentlemen were waiting to be admitted to the presence of the new-born. At one o'clock the doors flew open and the Chamberlain von Kolbe appeared. With hand on lips he beckoned the company along a narrow corridor into another room. There followed him the Field-Mmarshals

Anhalt and Schomberg, the Ministers Danckelmann, Grumbkow, Meinders, and Fuchs and the imperial and French ambassadors, whose respective sovereigns had both been bidden to godfather the child. They found the Elector standing beside a table, clad in red velvet coat and shorts and hose. His eyes beamed as he shook hands with the gentlemen. At the end of the room sat the court midwife, Justine Siegemund, holding a veiled bundle on her lap in which the deep bows of the passing dignitaries seemed to stir no emotion. The procession entered at one door and left by another, and it was not observed that Danckelmann and Fuchs remained behind. The doors being locked, they handed the Elector the decisive letter to his cousin of Orange, which, in the joy of his fatherhood, Frederic signed without hesitation. An officer stationed in a corridor immediately conveyed the fateful document to Lord Leven, whose traveling-coach was waiting at the Spandau gate.

While the Elector was sitting down to dine to the peal of trumpets on this, the happiest day of his life, Frau Christina Apelt was relating the circumstances of the birth in the parlor of the head coachman. Heidekamm was there and Kornmesser and old Biedekap and other members of the servile aristocracy. According to Frau Apelt, Justine was a skillful woman. But for all her learning there were things she did not know. It remained for Frau Apelt, after the manner of the honest old midwives, to foretell the future from the first gestures of the new-born babe. And the little Crown-Prince, scarcely brought to the light of day, had clenched his tiny right hand. To that fact Christina Apelt could bear witness. "That one will be fond of beating," she prophesied.

★(4)★

SINCE the birth of his son it was observed that the Elector held himself more erect. At the age of thirty-two Frederic's character seemed to undergo a transformation; he was both more decided and franker. He declared it to be his aim as a sovereign to be both just and mild, to protect art and trade and learning; after the difficult times of the Cæsar of Brandenburg he would have the muse of history record him as the country's Augustus. Now at last Eberhardt von Danckelmann seemed to harvest the fruit of his long teaching. All he needed was patience to witness the full ripening of a firm and straightforward character. At this time Danckelmann was very powerful. It was thought that all the business of state passed through his hands. He himself knew best that his master was not capable of giving his complete confidence to anyone. He observed with anger how, again and again, decisions were made without him. Upon the whole however, his superiority was not contested. Unhappily, he made others aware of it, too, treating the courtiers like drones, and disregarding even the Chamberlain von Kolbe, whose favor with the sovereign increased daily. He had few friends. The nobles hated him as a commoner. The army disliked him because he treated the generals like mere servants of the State and refused to take seriously those violent feuds among them which caused envious foreigners to say that this powerful military

State was guided by no firm hand at its helm. Nevertheless, Danckelmann was respected as one who sought to exercise both reason and economy. In fact, he drew the reins tight and resisted the expensive impulses of the highest personages, who had been accustomed to drawing upon the treasury of the State irrespective of its condition. The Elector had invited a number of highly paid foreign artists to Berlin. He himself sat over the drawings and designs of the noble buildings that were to transform the poor city of Berlin into a great capital. The little Crown-Prince was given a court such as was not possessed by the eldest son of the Danish King, and Sophie Charlotte's mansion was furnished with the utmost magnificence. Danckelmann ventured to sound a warning. Frederic dismissed him harshly. Crimson with anger, he came into the chancellery and said to his secretary that they might better look to see whether Ordu was not without with a silken cord for Danckelmann's neck after the pleasant custom of Turkish and other despots.

The secretary thus addressed was Thomas Altorf, whom the sovereign after his accession had transferred from his personal service back to the chancellery. Since Altorf felt not within him the makings of a courtier, he was not dissatisfied. But his friend Erdmute von Bellin was cruelly vexed. An estrangement grew up between them. It did not please her to think that after struggling for a divorce she would have to be the wife of an underpaid secretary and watch every penny and wait in the evening, like good Madame Stosch, until her husband came home. The devotion of the Minister von Fuchs was valuable to her. But she was careful not to grant him the slightest favor, only to keep him zealous for her divorce. So long as the Princess Marie Amalia did not remarry, she was safe enough. She shuddered at the very thought of re-

turning to her drunken husband and his knightly boon companions. She must be divorced at any cost. Indispensable to her was a spotless reputation; the suspicion of unchastity would ruin everything; according to the letter of a law promulgated by Frederic William shortly before his death, adultery had, in fact, been made a capital offense. Hence there were no more secret meetings with Altorf. Fuchs must never know that she lured him on in order to marry her old lover. Only a secret message assured Altorf from time to time that he was not wholly forgotten.

What did impress the Elector was the firmness with which his Prime-Minister von Danckelmann was prepared to resist the claims which his younger brothers based upon the old Elector's testament. Danckelmann absolutely refused the sons of Dorothea the territories left them; no sovereign, however great, had the right to alienate any part of his country. Frederic listened to this doctrine with admiration, but also with horror, seeing that he had himself been weak enough to promise to return the territory of Schwiebus. But in his soul this matter was bound up with his ambition to be a king. There had been no direct promise. But Baron Fridag had intimated that the return of Schwiebus would be considered in Vienna an act of royal magnanimity. Frederic found it, on the other hand, increasingly difficult to endure the cruel pressure applied by the Austrian ambassador, who well knew that the Elector was ashamed to reveal the matter to his Ministers. After long reflection Frederic determined to say nothing to Danckelmann on the subject of Schwiebus, but to sound him out in regard to the plan for the later coronation. It seemed to him that Danckelmann would not be able simply to cross so natural an ambition. In case he raised objections, Frederic intended to inform him that the assent of the Emperor had

already been obtained by the promise of an inconsiderable rectification of the frontier.

Before the Elector ventured upon this course he threw out a hint to Kolbe. He needed a confidant and he could not talk to his wife. No sooner did Kolbe hear that his master intended to reveal the great design, than he fell at his feet and besought him with tears not to profane his royal soul by opening it to a chilly rationalist. But this time the chamberlain had made a mistake. He knew not the most terrible secret, that of Schwiebus. "I know thy desire, Kolbe," said Frederic, angrily. "Thou wouldst have the matter of the crown rest between me and thee alone." The Elector was right. Kolbe did indeed desire to be a king-maker. Despite his master's anger he ventured to advise that the plan be revealed not to a single man, but to several. This proposal struck Frederic. Nor was it dishonest advice from a courtier, yet bad for all that.

In September the Elector prepared to travel to the banks of the Weser to meet his cousin William, whose English expedition was to follow immediately. At the same time Marshal Schomberg proceeded to the Rhine to occupy Cologne in order that it might under no circumstances fall into the hands of the French. Those Brandenburg troops which were to accompany the Prince of Orange to England started on their march toward the Zuyder Zee. On the morning of the Elector's departure the general officers, the Privy-Councilors, and the chief officers of the court were assembled in front of the Potsdam castle. Sophie Charlotte, surrounded by her ladies, sat on a dais; her husband came to bid her farewell and then turned to his traveling-coach, the six horses of which were pawing the earth. While the roll of drums filled the square he stopped once more and said two words to the Chamberlain von Kolbe. Kolbe ran back to the Ministers of State and

bade Danckelmann, Meinders, and Fuchs to approach His Serenity once more. The drummers fell silent and with respectful astonishment the assembly saw the sovereign in his long yellow traveling-cloak address those three with brief insistence. They were evidently extremely taken aback by the revelation made to them. He told them that he had resolved to put them into possession of a design which he had inherited from his father. As lord of the third most powerful army in Europe he esteemed the time to have come to raise his State to a higher rank. He demanded their opinion whether the assumption of royal dignity were appropriate, and instructed them to prepare a report thereon against his return. He turned swiftly without looking at Danckelmann and entered the coach. With his gloved hand to his lips he threw a final kiss to his wife.

His absence was longer than had been foreseen. During these weeks the world waited impatiently for news from Holland. William's fleet was ready to sail; troops and supplies were complete to the last boot. Yet he delayed and delayed. Once he commanded the fleet to put out to sea, but returned to the harbor next day, pleading unfavorable winds. At this report the friends of France were jubilant and the Protestants hung their heads. Even so staunch an admirer of the Prince of Orange as Danckelmann was frightened. His whole soul seemed to be with the anchors of the Dutch frigates. In this tormented state of mind he had to concern himself with the final command of his sovereign. The three Privy-Councillors feigned even among themselves to enter into an unprejudiced discussion. Meinders was the first to drop the mask and roundly come out as an opponent of the proposed kingdom. He was too close an adherent of Louis of France to desire Brandenburg to accept a diadem from the charity of the Em-

peror. Herr von Fuchs, the subtlest as well as the most self-regarding of the three, could see no purpose in the whole business, but desired primarily to be assured that it would be of no disadvantage to himself. He went to sound out his friend Fridag, and was confidentially informed that Vienna did not in the least welcome the thought of a king in Berlin.

The morning after his return Frederic read the report of his three Ministers. It constituted an elaborate but unmistakable no. That afternoon Danckelmann was received in audience. The Elector did not mention the report, but with compressed lips listened to the necessary accounts of state business. He did not appear at table that night nor send for food. But when at nine o'clock Kornmesser brought in a cold roasted cock and a wild boar paté and left them silently on a little table, the Elector partook of these viands very heartily. A little later Kolbe, who had not left the antechamber all day long, slipped into the study. On the evening before Kolbe had given a *souper* at the house of his friend Katherine Biedekap for Fuchs and Grumbkow. Both gentlemen were anxious to hear about the Elector's journey and were very glad to visit the house of the Rhenish lady in spite of the irregularity of her position. Kolbe, on the other hand, was glad to introduce distinguished people to Katherine, who was beginning to plague him with her desire to cut a figure in the great world. The evening had been a very merry one. Very late at night, clad only in a lacy Parisian *robe de nuit* Katherine had danced seductively to Kolbe's accompaniment on the clavichord. So Kolbe had been practicing his art of sleeping all day on a chair in the antechamber, prepared for any summons. When late that night he softly entered the study he found the Elector sitting with bent head at his desk. Frederic looked up and

burst into tears. Kolbe knelt down and kissed his master's hand.

"It is envy, Kasimir," said Frederic, drawing himself up. "Danckelmann would not have me be great. Ungrateful wretch! I will crush him! Does he not deserve it?"

"He does a thousand times. But the time has not yet come; he can still serve you. On the day on which his usefulness is gone you will destroy the ingrate!"

"Thou art right, Kolbe. We need him at this time of war. Nor shall the others whom he has seduced ever be advanced again. The lot of princes is hard; we are powerless against our own servants."

"Not powerless, my dearest master! Even God does not punish the evil-doer at once, but exercises vengeance in His own good time."

Somewhat consoled, the Elector dismissed his faithful Kolbe, who went straight to Madame Biedekap.

Alone in his room, Frederic went over to the window and gazed down at the dark river. The city was asleep. Then he went back to his desk and sat down and wrote out sundry reflections concerning the ingratitude of the high servants of the State which he prayed God to help him bear with a truly royal strength and patience. He had recently indited several such religious outpourings; they enhanced his sense of his own dignity and moral elevation.

★(5)★

LATE that year the storm burst whose black prophetic clouds the wise had long perceived. The dammed stream of fate, checked for years by skill and patience, broke thunderously forth. The world could no longer endure the insolently mounting power of the King of France. Yet first of all there poured out over Germany the resistless wave of 200,000 French soldiers. From an hundred towers the storm bells rang in a new epoch of which, alas, the fiery dawn was the burning of the German cities.

The most corrupt of the German princes, a Fürstenberg, had been elected by sheer bribery Prince Bishop of Cologne. He immediately delivered the fortresses of Kaiserswerth and Bonn to the French. At the last moment the troops of Brandenburg occupied Cologne, thus saving that city from the fate of Strassburg. Versailles was wroth at the news. The *Grand Monarque* thought it unfitting to have his royal decisions interfered with by an inconsiderable vassal state. Had he not paid those fellows in Berlin? He commanded that an additional gratuity of four thousand thaler be given to General Schöning in order that no more regiments approach the Rhine. For the King desired no war there until he knew what Orange would do. Would he really sail for England in order to be trapped there like a rat? The Empire he was willing to leave

to his good friends the Turks, who were giving the Emperor trouble enough.

But now a courier dashed into Paris: the Austrians had taken Belgrade—Belgrade, the citadel of the Danube, the key to the empire of the Osmanli! The earth trembled under the Sublime Porte; one had a vision of Croats flooding down toward Stamboul, followed by the long solemn cuirassiers of Germany. A sympathetic tremor was felt at Versailles. To see Belgrade in Christian hands was a terrible blow to the Most Christian King. Two days later the Dauphin was ordered to join the army in Alsace. The King had desired to be patient; they were forcing his hand. Two more days and everywhere along the extended frontier the French columns entered Germany and leaped like panthers upon its unprotected neck. Before one knew it they were in Kaiserslautern, Speier, Worms, and had taken the fortress of Philippsburg. A handsome war! The Dauphin was in Mannheim and in Heidelberg and the Elector of Mayence could hardly wait to give up his capital. The French marched into the center of Germany and panic terror spread to its very ends. Heidelberg burned like tinder. The people of the Palatinate did not know how they could have pacified at the same time the King of France, the Emperor, the Sultan, and the Stadtholder of Holland. But seeing they were Germans, they were not surprised that all the cruel blows rained down on their defenseless backs.

'Twas well that Germany was there to receive all the blows that might have fallen on others. For long weeks that great sage, William of Orange, could be seen walking up and down the shore and peering forth for better weather for his ships. Aye, the weather grew better; every German village that burned cleared the air. Every added mile of Germany

that the French devastated was like a fresh wind to his sails. This was precisely what the brooding master of statecraft had awaited. This fine war of King Louis against Germany meant complete security for Holland. The Dutch praised God that the cruel tempest had struck the Germans. Now all was well for them. The Bourse of Amsterdam flourished as it had not done for years and the shares of the Dutch East India Company advanced by ten per cent. Hitherto the Prince's expedition had been considered but a dubious business. Now it was suddenly a safe investment and the Prince's public loan of a million guilders was promptly oversubscribed. With the utmost prudence he waited until the French teeth had bitten themselves fast into German flesh. Then he leaped. In November a fleet of a hundred ships crossed the channel. Schomberg, having deserted Brandenburg for higher pay, was his general. Six thousand soldiers of the Elector Frederic went with him to redeem Britain. The English people paid no attention to these, but mistook them for Dutchmen and let them be duly killed for English freedom somewhere in Scotland or Ireland. Poor peasant lads from the Elbe and the Oder, what more could they expect than to die in a great cause? The English rejected James the Second, who fled. All over Europe the scribblers of the gazettes had lame fingers from overwork. The Prince and liberator entered London and in Westminster Abbey he and his wife were crowned sovereigns of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

These were great days for Eberhardt von Danckelmann. Who but he had upheld the wavering soul of the Elector? Schöning, of course, did all in his power to have the troops recalled from Holland. Pressure was applied to the Elector to march into Silesia and take it from the Emperor, else would the Poles rush on to Berlin. Suddenly it was too late for any

of these possibilities. William was in England. The British Privy-Council handsomely declared that, next to God and the new king, England owed her liberation to the Elector of Brandenburg. Frederic beamed and caused a magnificent medal to be struck by Faltz in commemoration of these events. For the huge burden imposed upon the finances of Brandenburg not a shilling's reparation was ever received from Great Britain. England had her own burden to bear.

And what of the Empire? Was there still one? The French armies went on burning and murdering, and not even a counter-declaration of war was issued against them. The German people were simply beasts in a slaughter-pen. Did Vienna not hear? Ah, the soul of the Emperor Leopold was cruelly troubled by the French devastation of Germany, but it was equally troubled by the Dutchman's conquest of England. Though the Electorates of the Rhine stood in flames, yet was the instigator at least a Catholic. But in England war was made against the true religion and the pious Emperor would bring no comfort to the heretic William by declaring war against France. Danckelmann slept no night until a secret message came from Vienna that the Pope had written with his own hand to the Emperor explaining to him that it was God's will to glorify the Church through the service of the heretics, wherefore an alliance with them was a high necessity. That counsel was followed. At last in the springtime the Empire prepared to resist and the Duke of Lorraine, the imperial generalissimo, was approaching. Versailles had long seen what a frightful mistake it had been to attack Germany instead of Holland. Angrily the King commanded his glorious armies to draw back to the Rhine. On that march back they again made land and folk pay for their presence. Worms was re-

duced to ashes and the cathedral of Speier destroyed, and out of their broken sarcophagi flew the bones of the mediæval emperors. Mannheim was reduced to ruins and the walls of Heidelberg made level with the earth.

It went better on the lower Rhine. There stood the Brandenburgers in touch with the Dutch army. In spite of Danckelmann's objection, Schöning commanded these troops. But he had crossed the Wesel River, met Barfus there, attacked the French, and beaten them soundly. Now the plan was swiftly to retake the fortresses lost by the treachery of the Bishop of Cologne. The Electoral campaign had begun brilliantly. Frederic prepared to join the armies in order to receive in person the capitulation of the Rhenish fortresses. Sophie Charlotte was to accompany him in order to divert herself in Cologne. When once Bonn was recaptured he intended to have her come to the very camp and, a victorious general, let the army pass in review under the eye of its lovely sovereign.

Now no one doubted the greatness of Danckelmann as a statesman. But Paul von Fuchs was supervising the government in Berlin, since Danckelmann had accompanied the Elector and desired his pupil, after the retaking of the German fortresses, to proceed with that coalition and that invasion of France which old Frederic William had planned and once written down with his own hand.

At seven o'clock in the morning of a fine warm day in June Fuchs was sitting in the chancellery and examining State papers. He had learned from the old Elector the art of going straight to the core of any matter. Among these papers he found one which, since it concerned the parsons, belonged to his particular department. It bore the signature of the Lutheran pastor Heintzelmann and of seven of the latter's brethren in office and contained an accusation against Herr Thomas

Altorf, secretary in His Serenity's chancellery, of having, three years ago, aided and abetted the escape from prison of a confessed atheist and rebel by the name of Knutsen. Driven by his conscience, the gaoler whom he had bribed had now confessed. This gaoler, who had been discharged from his position for incurable drunkenness, had come to Herr Heintzelmann and as a pious Christian besought the latter's help for himself and his starving children. The gaoler had taken oath that the escaped Knutsen had been a dangerous rebel against the high person of the Elector Frederic William of blessed memory. The document went on to relate that the aforesaid Altorf had been born and educated in the heresy of Faustus Socinus, from whose thrice-accursed blood he even boasted his descent. There followed an outline of the execrable doctrine of the Socinians, who reject the Trinity and the divinity of Christ and deny the resurrection of the dead, asserting marriage to be not a sacrament, but a mere contract, and shamelessly demanding that the government teach reading and writing to the vulgar. Swinishly do they assert that no true Christian should be a soldier, wherewith they undermine and put to confusion the power of all high potentates. . . . Aha! And what else was that he saw? The document added that Herr Altorf's walk and conversation, especially in regard to holy matrimony, was such as might well be expected from his diabolical opinions. He was reputed to sustain sinful relations with a married woman, but concerning that the petitioners preferred to be silent. . . . Aha!

At best Paul Fuchs was not very fond of Altorf. An arrogant fellow! When one gave him a command he stood there with head erect as though he had known it all before. A great friend of Stosch's, too. Both were philosophers. Fuchs didn't like that, either. So Altorf had affairs with married women!

Well, that didn't seem as serious to Fuchs as it did to the parsons. He wondered who it was. Madame Stosch? Was one sage presenting another with horns? Fuchs had no objection to doing the Lutheran pastors a favor nor to depriving Altorf of his office. He knew, however, that the man had once been very close to the Elector, who might still desire to protect him. Frau Erdmute von Bellin had once related that the Elector had given Altorf a ring of great value. Hence one would have to be prudent; the matter could, at least, be deferred until fall.

There was announced the great Samuel von Puffendorf, who had now been long in Berlin, studying the archives of the House of Brandenburg. He had been summoned to decide in a difficult matter likewise touching upon religion. Whenever he entered a room it was as though a statue of the Emperor Augustus had taken to walking. His figure and gait were as majestic as ever. But he was pale from his huge labors. He spent fourteen hours a day in reading the archives and making excerpts therefrom, and he often wondered whether he would survive to write his mighty life of the great Elector on the basis of his fifty thousand excerpts.

The matter was this: At the end of her year of mourning the Duke Morris William of Sachsen-Zeitz had asked for the hand of the Princess Marie Amalia. Between these two there existed, it was clear, a veritable passion such as occurs in romantic tales and hardly ever between persons of high rank. The Elector Frederic, who was fond of his sister, was inclined, in view of her brief and sad first marriage, to permit this alliance. Unluckily, young Zeitz was a Lutheran and the Electoral House of Saxony, which was opposed to the marriage for political reasons, spread the rumor that the Lutheran faith

would be endangered by the Calvinist Princess. Hence the Elector gave order that the archives be searched for some decision of his revered father in similar cases. To find such a decision was Puffendorf's task.

The great man bowed:

"May I ask Your Excellency whether there be any good news from the Rhine?"

"Aye. We are besieging Kaiserswerth and the imperial and High German troops are rallying before Mayence."

"'Tis well! Let us knock the Frenchmen on the head!"

"The whole world is rising in indignation against France. She has no ally but the Turk. Her invasion without declaration of war was void of shame."

"Aye, but what does law or right matter?"

"Must I hear a Puffendorf say that?"

"Your Excellency, as an old servant of *Justitia* I know that lady well. Not only is she blind; she is deaf and lame. 'Tis best to have on one's side both justice and heavy cannon."

"What is the teaching of history? Did not right always prevail in the end, even as our religion teaches us?"

"History, I am afraid, decides heathenishly rather than after Christian example. The Almighty seems to be on the side of the successful. Justice scrambles behind."

"Do you read that lesson in the archives pertaining to our late master?"

"Would you have me lie? The late sovereign had not might enough; 'twas therefore he had to use the crutch of right. He was a man who could have created his own right, even like the King of France."

"But the law of the Empire exists. What are we to do with the Empire?"

"We are to devour it."

"Upon my word! Our stomach will never digest it."

"'Twill expand. What matter sixty years or even an hundred?"

"Is the Holy Roman Empire, then, so wretched a thing?"

"A monster! I have printed that truth ten times and adhere to it. A monster which will die of its own monstrosity, for no man can cure it. An ill-set limb cannot be straightened except it be broken again; the man will come who will break it."

"Our sovereign must respect the rights of his peers, the German princes."

"Do you think that the German princes are especially favored by God because they have blond hair? The necessity of the State—that is God's right in this wretched world."

"What would I not give to be able to converse with you daily. Meanwhile, since you are here, there is another matter. I have long thought that such ideas as yours should be deeply implanted into the young in order that the State have other servants and scholars. We must found an academy in which politics are cultivated equally with theology."

"A sublime idea! The universities are worthless. The thick-headed professors derive everything from the Bible, so that the authority of the sovereign counts for less than the word of some ancient Hebrew. Your Excellency's plan is admirable. We should have a university where strict subordination is inculcated not according to Scripture but by arguments conformable to the human reason."

"I have thought of Halle as the fit seat of such a university. But whom shall we call to teach there?"

"It must be carefully thought upon. To begin with there

is my friend Christian Thomasius. He has long been eager to enter the service of Brandenburg. He will never be advanced in Leipzig, seeing that he teaches the law of nature and reason according to my books."

" 'Tis the same Thomasius who issues the famous monthly dialogues?"

"He will cease that activity. He is still young and has a satiric gift and a facile pen. But the foundation is solid. I stake my reputation on his juristic excellence."

Herr von Fuchs arose.

"The matter might become practical very soon. Much has been prepared. Will you, then, without making a definite promise, give Herr Thomasius a hint that he may expect to hear from us? 'Twere better that, in the meantime, he avoid unnecessary controversies."

★(6)★

A PRIVATE of the fusiliers, blue coat with pewter buttons and white facings, leathern breeches and white stockings, stood sentinel by night at the edge of the road between Beuel and Sieg. The road ran along the camp of General von Barfus. On the opposite side of the road were stationed the sentinels of the Bishop of Münster, whose contingent had valiantly aided the troops of the Elector in storming the intrenchment of Beuel.

"Hast thou nothing for me? I die of hunger!" Thus called the Brandenburger over to the Westphalian whose slow and comfortable chewing he could hear.

"Come and take a bite of my sausage, Wendish dirt-eater!"

"I dare not move from the spot. Whoever leaves his watch is shot!"

"Then stay! I'll not bring it thee."

After a little while the Brandenburger crept across the road and received a piece of sausage and a mouthful of spirits.

"You fellows are rich. Our Elector ought to take everything away from you, since there be so many more of us."

"I saw thy hunchback Elector t'other day at the taking of Kaiserswerth. Our bishop—there's a man! He could pick up that there Elector with one arm and set him down on the chamber-pot!"

"Aye, but a bishop like that is naught but a Catholic louse!"

"Lutheran swine, wilt thou abuse my faith?"

"Eh, art thou of that party, too? I thought thou wert like ourselves with an honest German tongue in thy head. The wounded French that we carried from the intrenchment—they're a stupid folk. A man can't understand their babble. I'm glad we're through here. I want to go home."

"Through, sayest thou? 'Tis but beginning!"

"What else is there to be done? Did we not take the intrenchment? Two in my company are dead and the captain was shot in the leg."

"Know ye not why the intrenchment was taken? 'Twas to station their artillery upon it. In a few days the bombardment of Bonn will begin."

"Is that yon Catholic town with towers?"

But before the Münster man could answer, the Brandenburger, who was sitting on a stone, received a violent blow from a cane on his head. His lieutenant had crept up on an unexpected round. The officer, still beating the man with his cane, dragged him across the road to camp, roaring for the official flagellator, to whom, according to the formidable discipline of this army, the private had at once to be turned over. The lieutenant himself would have received a caning had it occurred to his captain to make a round of inspection among the sentinels.

Next morning the Elector, who usually remained with the chief body of the army on the left bank, was rowed across the Rhine in order to inspect the intrenchment of Beuel and the preparations for the great bombardment. He examined everything carefully and walked through the trenches that had been dug along the river-bank exactly opposite the city.

One hundred and forty cannon had been drawn up, as well as a dozen mortars at either end. The plan of swiftly reducing the city by a tremendous artillery assault across the Rhine, instead of by a slow siege, had been insisted upon by Field-Marshal von Schöning. Many of the generals had been opposed to this plan and Frederic himself had had his doubts. But he was tormented by a passion for fame. When he had left his wife in Cologne she had had her accustomed expression, which one might interpret as either amiable or ironic. He burned to conduct Sophie Charlotte up the Rhine and to show her a conquered city at his feet. Perhaps she would admire him as a great warrior. It would be magnificent could he liberate Bonn and, having shown how fortresses can be reduced, join the Duke of Lorraine in front of Mayence.

The great bombardment began on the following evening at nine o'clock and did not cease for four and twenty hours. Fires sprang up in the city within the first half hour; next day almost the whole of Bonn lay in ashes. This left the commandant, Baron Asfeld, one of the best of the French generals, quite unmoved. He forbade any firing in reply. The French garrison simply let the city burn and the citizens howl and sat safely in the earthworks and dry trenches behind it. The walls and towers came crashing down. The French general did nothing; the Rhine continued to flow between him and the enemy. Barfus kept up his firing in a feebler manner for three days. Then he stopped. The troops were rowed back across the river. Frederic commanded a council of war to assemble. Was a formal investment now advisable? Schöning, whose first plan had failed, now demanded an immediate quick assault. Frederic looked at his Prime-Minister. Dankelmann did not even deign to speak in front of the generals. It was his opinion that the armies were wholly lacking in the vigor

they had possessed under the old Elector. Else one would have been on French soil before now. The Elector mumbled that he would give his decision the next day.

That evening the Field-Marshal received the order to hold a thousand cavalrymen in readiness at dawn to protect an inspection which the sovereign himself would undertake.

At four o'clock in the morning Frederic rode forth with Danckelmann and Schöning. The cavalry detachment was nowhere to be seen. Schöning cursed and put the blame on the delay of Count Dohna and his *musketiers*. The Elector silently turned his horse and rode straight toward Bonn. Danckelmann remained close behind him. They were accompanied only by a squadron of sentinels. Schöning remained behind in the camp. Soon Frederic came within reach of the enemy's artillery. And it was curious that shots were fired at the little group as though upon some preconcerted signal. But the Elector rode on past Bonn to Poppelsdorf. Alone he dashed up a little hill, and there, too, the bullets began to whiz at once. Suddenly Danckelmann was beside him:

"You must go back! Treachery is about us!"

"Silence, sir! You are no soldier. These are ordinary incidents."

"I have known Your Serenity all your life; I do not deserve ill of you. I tell you that Schöning is a scoundrel!"

"Have a care, Danckelmann!"

"The devil take this Herr von Schöning! Immediately after your accession he took four thousand thaler from the French; Cologne was already invested when he took another four thousand to persuade you to march into Silesia against the Emperor. I am weary of seeing a rogue like that in command of the armies!"

"Weary, sir? 'Tis I who command here!"

The sentinels gathered about him again and the group rode down to Poppelsdorf. Suddenly shots came from behind near-by hedges and several of the men fell dead from their horses. The French aimed at the horse of the Elector, seeming to know that it carried a yellow blanket. He was unprotected for a moment. Danckelmann took his horse by the reins and dashed on till they were under cover. Silently Frederic rode back to headquarters. That evening the command was issued to follow Schöning's plan and to encamp upon the heights of Bonn. But the thirty thousand men whom the Elector commanded were not enough. It was said in August that six weeks had been wasted in taking the intrenchment and in the fruitless bombardment. Sophie Charlotte was already on her way home from Cologne. The generals quarreled violently with one another. Danckelmann went about with rage on his face. The sovereign blamed no one, but betrayed impatience. The news came that the imperial troops were about to lay siege to Mayence. The weather got worse and the mood of the troops was depressed. Since the days of the old Elector the discipline in the army had been harsh. Now it grew cruel. The officers were in constant rage. They could not get at the city and the canes trembled in their hands. Worst of all was the smoldering conflict between Schöning and Barfus.

News came that a strong French army under Marshal Boufflers had crossed the Mosel at Berncastel. The Elector took the heroic measure of sending Schöning with ten thousand men to attack Boufflers. Schöning morosely marched against the French, who evaded him; thus he gave them time to recross the Mosel. Then he returned. Scarcely had he arrived in Bonn when a courier came to the Elector bearing a demand of the Duke of Lorraine for help against Mayence.

This demand was considered to be couched in arrogant language; it was accompanied by a private letter of Fridag to the Elector which Frederic showed to no one. But he dispatched General von Barfus with six thousand men to Mayence. Receiving the news, however, that Mayence had already capitulated, Barfus returned after three days. He rode to headquarters and was graciously received and dismissed by the Elector. Returning through the ante-chamber he saw his commander-in-chief, Schöning, in conversation with four or five officers. Turning to the entire group, Herr von Barfus remarked that he had just come back with his troops. Excitedly Schöning cried:

"Sir, why did you not then report to me?"

Slowly Barfus turned around.

"I do as I like."

Although pale with rage, Schöning controlled himself. He said that the respect due to the nearness of His Serenity prevented him from expressing his true opinion. Barfus went out with rattling spurs and stopped on the stairs to talk to a friend. There Schöning ran into him again. At the gate fate caused a third meeting. Schöning let go the stirrup and burst out, demanding why the devil he was treated with such shameless disrespect.

"I'll have no dealings with you," roared Barfus.

"So long as we are both in the service you will have to! You are impertinent, sir!"

"And you are something much worse! The army is disgusted with you!"

"That's mutiny! I have my commission from the Elector!"

"Whose life you recently placed in the greatest jeopardy!"

"'Tis a lie! Dohna disobeyed orders!"

"Herr von Dohna swears that you ordered him for five

o'clock and not for four. And Herr von Dohna, sir, is a man of honor."

Inarticulately the two men roared. In his rage Barfus brought down his stick on the right boot of Schöning. With his own Schöning knocked the stick out of the other's hand. Barfus drew his sword. Now frightened officers who had watched came running up. Frederic had been attracted to the window by the angry voices and had witnessed the whole wretched scene. Both generals were commanded to retire to their quarters and to give up their swords.

At Count Dohna's that evening met all those who hated Schöning. Nor were the noncommissioned officers and the privates unaffected. Among the auxiliary troops, at least, it was openly said that it was foolish to fight with an army whose leading generals engaged in public fights like drunken camp-followers.

Danckelmann, who had a heavy hand, spared the Elector nothing. A fellow like Schöning, he said, should never have been advanced, and insisted upon an investigation by the council of Ministers.

Now the Elector knew less than ever what was to be done. The fortress could not be stormed, but only starved out. He sent a messenger with a flag of truce to summon two French officers to his camp. These were told of the fall of Mayence and instructed to offer General Asfeld honorable terms of surrender. The latter replied with thanks that he would first have to inquire at Versailles.

Next came the news that the Duke of Lorraine was approaching to aid the Brandenburgers against Bonn. The news excited Frederic profoundly. He engaged in immediate activity. But it was all futile. When the Duke approached with the Austrian and Hessian troops Frederic rode up the Rhine

an hour's distance to welcome him. A dinner was given to the generals of the allies and an inspection of the siegeworks was undertaken. When late that evening Frederic returned to headquarters he found the Austrian ambassador, Von Fridag, waiting for him in the ill-lit anteroom. The Elector was shocked. But Fridag remained only a moment and was very reverential. Nevertheless, he kept walking about the camp daily, and in his look, even from afar, was something that filled Frederic with dread.

Two weeks longer the army waited. Then, just before the general storming of the starving city was ordered, the French commander sent word that he would accept honorable terms of capitulation. Frederic, sick of the blood he had seen, granted the garrison retreat to the French frontier with full military honors.

That evening Frederic and the Duke rode in company of their commanders through the frightfully devastated city of Bonn. In order to liberate the Fatherland from the enemy the Germans had so bombarded this German city that no house was left standing. After this ride came the great festivity to celebrate the victory, from which the Elector withdrew at an early hour. It was his intention to leave during the next day. He arose at four and prayed; at five he worked with Danckelmann; at seven with Fuchs; for eight o'clock he had summoned the general officers to place before them the problem of the army's winter quarters. But when Fuchs left and the generals were to assemble, an adjutant announced that the Austrian ambassador requested an immediate audience on pressing imperial business. Frederic shuddered and his heart missed a beat.

Fridag was brief. After a seemly repetition of the congratulations on the victory over the French he added in the

same sentence that the hour had now come to fulfill that solemn promise to the Emperor which would be an additional sign of the unity of the entire German people. Frederic bowed his head so that his hump showed sharply. He said huskily that he quite agreed, but that at this moment he was about to leave and would take the matter of Schweibus under consideration in Berlin.

"Your Serenity," said Fridag with his clear cool voice, "this business admits of no farther delay. His Majesty insists upon the immediate return of the territory."

The Elector's nerves gave way. "I simply refuse to discuss that now!"

"Then my mission at your court is at an end and it grieves me to inform you that troops are waiting in Silesia to march into Schwiebus. Vienna is determined to have the territory and, if necessary, to use force."

"What? Am I to be treated thus after my sacrifices for the Empire?"

For a second time he raised his voice so high that the frightened adjutant opened the door and revealed the astonished face of Danckelmann. The Elector was still beside himself.

"Enter, Herr von Danckelmann! 'Twas you who always urged me to make common cause with the Empire. You shall now learn how the Emperor thanks me."

But when his Prime-Minister entered Frederic's anger disappeared and only embarrassment remained. He begged Herr von Fridag to withdraw, promising him an immediate answer. Alone with his awe-inspiring Councilor he forced himself to say almost casually that here was an old difference that must be settled. The fruits of the great alliance were now evident. But three years ago that alliance itself was threatened by the

equal stubbornness concerning the territory of Schwiebus of his own father and of the Emperor. In order to save the great cause of the Germans he had therefore privily promised to give back that wretched strip to the greedy Austrians if in the end they insisted on it.

"What? You did that?" Danckelmann forgot himself entirely. He fell back into the rôle of the stern teacher who had scolded his naughty pupil Fritz. His pent-up wrath broke loose. He left nothing unsaid. The State was being ruined, the discipline of the army was broken, the court was ruled by that lecherous rogue Kolbe, and all the while one played with the dangerous dream of a crown. Now he understood the growing arrogance of the Austrians. As for himself, Danckelmann ended, he was as ever the Elector's humble servant, but of this Schwiebus affair he begged to wash his hands. Perhaps Herr von Fuchs would be more accommodating. Danckelmann stalked out and sent for Fuchs. The waiting generals were dismissed.

Frederic gnashed his teeth. Intolerable humiliation. He promised himself vengeance upon Danckelmann. But when Herr Paul von Fuchs entered poor Frederic found himself in worse torment. Fuchs was much more respectful, even obsequious, but he had the cruel art of plucking that old web asunder thread by quivering thread. Who had first given Frederic the idea? Ah yes, his uncle Anhalt? How did that document look? Had it been a folio-sheet or of smaller format? Who had brought it out to Köpenik? The Baron Wolff. So, so, so, the Jesuit! Surely His Serenity knew the exact contents? Frederic could not remember the words. Then there must of course be a copy. Unfortunately, no. Well, had no one read the document? Was there no witness? Secretary Altorf had been present. Fuchs flew up. The man had better

be put in chains at once! The Elector forbade that; the secretary had done as he had been told. Fuchs said it was a dangerous matter to let the man, who was a notorious atheist in addition, run about with that secret.

Nevertheless the worst was over. Frederic gradually climbed out of the pit of his deepest humiliation. Fuchs and Danckelmann were in his confidence. When they came to him that evening he intended to confront them boldly. It was their business to accept the fact and do the best they could. When they appeared they announced that their advice was a blank refusal of the Austrian demand. The agreement, Danckelmann pedantically explained, had been obtained by dishonorable means. The then heir to the throne had been in no position to have a complete knowledge of affairs and hence to understand that the alliance he had been asked to save had never been in danger. The Elector listened with evident vexation. To the astonishment of the two gentlemen his reply was brusque. A dispute between two sovereigns admitted of no such settlement. Their advice was bad. A sovereign could not plead imperfect understanding like a peasant playing with loaded dice at an inn. He must not and he would not refuse to abide by his given word. But there must be temporizing and delay. Time must be gained and obstacles interposed. To accomplish these ends was the business of his advisers who now had a chance to prove their vaunted skill. Fuchs listened with the utmost care. Danckelmann said no more that he would have nothing to do with the matter. But Frederic and he parted from each other like two snarling hounds.

It was determined that Danckelmann was to leave for Berlin at once to continue the necessary negotiations with Holland and England and to prepare for next year's campaign. Two days later the Elector departed to visit Kleve. Fuchs was to

remain at Bonn and negotiate with Fridag; he was to make objections without threatening to break the promise. Finally Fridag left for Vienna to obtain further instructions. But Fuchs was forced to stay here because the allies would not permit the troops of Brandenburg to take up winter quarters on the Rhine and it was a Herculean labor to start many thousands of men back to their own country. Fuchs caused the Brandenburgers to be gathered in with iron discipline. Whole companies had deserted and drunkenly plundered the neighboring villages. Coming back wearily one afternoon from these wretched tasks, Fuchs nearly stumbled over a huge body prone in drunken stupor across the road. It was an officer! Determined to institute an example, he had the man thrown into a cart. A sergeant of the same Prussian regiment stood near. Fuchs asked the fellow who this swine was. The answer came: It was Captain von Bellin. Fuchs immediately commanded that the snoring man be transported, not to the guard-house, but to his own quarters. When the man awoke, he intended to question him in his own person.

★(7)★

THE wedding of Marie Amalia and Morris William von Zeitz had taken place during the summer. It had been even less festive than her first wedding. The Elector had already departed with the army and her mother had been ill at Carlsbad. In her new home the young Duchess had to practice the art of winning over recalcitrant subjects. The good Lutherans of Zeitz were indignant at seeing a Calvinist in the castle and the Electoral government of Saxony did its best to fan the flame. Orthodox pamphlets flew back and forth and there was a renewal of all the bitterness of ecclesiastical controversy. This snapping and barking called forth a controversialist who had a sharper tooth than the zealots. This was Thomasius in Leipzig. Evil tongues said that the clever Christian, knowing he would never be preferred at Leipzig, gave Berlin this resonant proof of his usefulness. The pamphlet, at all events, with which he lashed the orthodox opponents of the Duchess created a violent irritation in the government at Dresden. Thomasius was forbidden, under pains of severe punishment, either to lecture or to publish. Since he had no salary, this reduced him and his family to beggary. Winter having set in, he fled from Leipzig and sought refuge with his young ducal friends at Zeitz.

Not long thereafter the Zeitz couple were invited to Berlin. Frederic and Sophie Charlotte had not seen their sister since

her second marriage. At Berlin, moreover, brilliant festivities were being planned for this winter in order to inaugurate fitly the rule of the young Electoral couple after the melancholy years of mourning and of war. Kolbe, raised to the high rank of commandant of the castle, was to display his talent for elegant and sumptuous entertainment.

On a clear winter morning the company in the Berlin castle set out on sleighs in order to amuse themselves in the Grunewald till nightfall and to return by torchlight. The Elector was kept in the city by the cares of state, but his wife was of the party. Kolbe had sent ahead baskets of food as well as the castle musicians, who were to welcome the guests at the old hunting-lodge and to play if anyone desired to dance. The Zeitz couple was naturally invited. But Marie Amalia begged her sister-in-law to excuse her and her husband and inquired whether the road to Köpenick were passable. The lovers desired to visit the spot where they had first met.

When they arrived they found the castle desolate. They walked through deserted halls and stepped out on the balcony that gave on the river. The water about the little island was frozen and the land beyond lay deep under snow. The Duchess had determined to go through the whole house. But she shivered and her desire had fled. In the park, too, all seemed different from of old. They came upon the statue of a huntsman coated over with ice; beneath it lay a stone figure which Morris William recognized as representing a boar's head. On the other side of the garden they came upon a weather-beaten shed and recognized in it their little lodge of Dying-Blue. The door was open and the place empty except for a few benches and a rough table. Where were Besser's blue hangings and where the book-chest with its little carven columns, and where the lute? Marie Amalia was no longer a

sentimental maiden; she found it far too cool to weep over Philip von Zessen. Yet her eyes did grow moist as though the shadow of the Adriatic Rosamond still hovered within these walls. The Duke ordered the caretaker to have warm things brought from the sleigh. When the lackey and the coachman had brought out furs and robes and Marie Amalia, well wrapped up, ate her handful of sweets, her mood grew lighter.

"How do you feel now, Madame Sweetheart?" her husband asked, jestingly.

"How strangely things have happened, Morris! Did you ever think we would sit here as proper married folks? Not all who were here then have fared so well. There's poor Thomasius, who made us laugh!"

"We'll find him a post in Brandenburg. I mentioned him to your brother the other day and he listened quite graciously."

"And poor Erdmute!"

"Why not, my dearest, take Frau Bellin back to Zeitz?"

"Never, Morris! Not after the affront she offered me! To become lady in waiting to our silly, niggardly cousin Holstein-Beck, only to remain in Berlin!"

"What was she to do when you dismissed her?"

"Go home to her children. But she is set upon getting a divorce, the amorous creature!"

"And yet for years she was your best friend!"

"Do you know what she said when Louise Radziwill first accepted the Pole and then secretly married the Count Palatine? She said that women, poor things, could not help having men turn their heads. One must not judge them harshly. She had her friend Altorf and I knew it, Morris, and protected her. And now they say she has an affair with that old rake Fuchs!"

Meanwhile the procession of sleighs had returned from the Grunewald to the castle with torches and cracking whips and laughter. In his study the Elector was vexed by the noise. He felt exhausted. The council of state had been interminable and there had been many such sessions recently, during which the Ministers quarreled loudly in the Elector's very presence. The crushed French party raised its head again and battled valiantly with the friends of Holland and of the Empire. To be sure, the French had left the Rhine, but for every soldier killed there the King had three others, and his treasure was like the sea. Danckelmann fought like a tiger because there were those who had the audacity to advise the Elector to swing over to the French side.

Frederic thought of his little son whom he had just visited. The Crown-Prince was a sturdy child, made of stronger stuff than his parents. With hard blue eyes he gazed out of his cradle and howled with angry vigor. His mother rarely showed him any tenderness. Of her, too, Frederic was thinking. Two nights ago he had sent her the symbolic cushion. The lackey brought as answer that Her Serenity was grateful for so much solicitude; she was in bed with a toothache and Fräulein von Pöllnitz was reading to her.

Scarcely had the Commandant von Kolbe left the sleigh than he was summoned to the study. His master was in a somber mood and listened silently to an account of the excursion. Kolbe, who was learned in the souls of princes, knew that at such moments only the murmur of the gentlest words could perhaps avert a tempest. Nevertheless he ventured to mention a matter that was very close to his heart, namely, the sumptuous masquerade that had been planned. Suddenly the Elector interrupted him and began to talk of none other than

of Madame Biedekap. For Frederic was minded to put this friend of his to a test today.

The summer before Katherine had given birth to a boy, concerning whose paternity all Berlin was of the same opinion. The Elector had heard a good deal about Kolbe's liaison. Quite by accident he had never caught sight of Madame Biedekap until earlier on this very day.

"Why didst thou never tell me, Kolbe, that old Biedekap has a son? Even though he has left me, I like to know what happens among my former servants. I've seen the woman—a handsome enough wench. The child bears a strong resemblance to Biedekap. An ugly little creature! But what can one expect from an old fellow like that."

Profoundly disturbed, but with a reverential air, Kolbe listened to his master's malicious remarks. He suspected that the test was but beginning. Whenever the Elector was yellow like that and had those deep shadows under his nose, the day was evil. He went on:

"I would talk with the woman, Kolbe, and give her a christening gift for her brat, seeing that Biedekap was so long in my service. Let her be told that she is to appear here this evening in my study and wait. Also inform the major-domo that I would have my sister, the Duchess of Zeitz, sit next to me at table.

If Sophie Charlotte were to learn of this, it would not displease him.

Next morning at four o'clock Kolbe was at the *lever*. At nine o'clock the Elector went into conference with the Privy-Council and Herr von Kolbe could at last drive back to the handsome little town house which he had recently acquired to drink his morning chocolate. His lackey gave him a little package left by an unknown messenger. Within it he found a

neat little ram's horn crowned with a little crown of golden paper. Kolbe forgot himself and boxed the lackey's ears. At ten o'clock came Katherine Biedekap and laughingly took her seat at the breakfast table. She cried at once:

"Don't make such a face, old man! 'Twas nothing. You could have visited me during the night. He came in like a whipped schoolboy and I curtesied to the floor. Then he said, Sit down, Madame. He didn't say much more but gave me a purse with twenty ducats and chucked me ever so gently under the chin. Then he dismissed me. I believe your Elector is scared of women. One of our Emmerich boatmen would have handled me differently. Those are fellows, not like you people."

"Be quiet and don't mention our exalted master and oafs like that in the same breath. How can you make the comparison?"

"Why can't I? 'Tis I who can, Kasimir, being something of an expert."

"I would not hear about your origin."

"If 'tis not noble enough for you, my friend, you can let me go. Did I ever pretend to be a countess? My father is the innkeeper Rickers, and if all men went without their clothes, the boatmen on the Rhine would make a better showing than the gentlemen at court."

"Katherine, did I deserve that? What were you before I met you?"

"Ah, I might have done better. The Schoolmaster Matthias said that I was good enough for a king. Nor must I forget to say that the Elector intends to have me summoned again. Isn't that sweet and condescending of him?"

"Did he say that? The devil!"

That evening Sophie Charlotte was reading a very learned

book. Madame Krosigk, embroidering beside her, moved about uneasily. When Her Serenity interrupted herself to take a pinch of snuff from her golden box, Madame Krosigk could no longer restrain herself but related that Kolbe had offered his own mistress, a woman of servile birth, to the Elector. Calmly Sophie Charlotte said, "*Eh bien, si cela semble divertissant à mon mari!*" She read on. Nevertheless the latest discoveries of science seemed not to fascinate her quite so much as they had done. Swiftly and distraughtly she took one pinch of snuff after another.

THAT day in the camp at Bonn, when Captain von Bellin woke up out of his drunken stupor, not only did Herr von Fuchs reproach him severely for his behavior, but added that his lamentable wife was known at court and intended to ask for a divorce on the grounds of drunkenness and brutality. Silently and with a dull aching head the captain listened. He had beaten and been beaten, had hungered and gotten drunk for so many years that the reprimand left him quite indifferent. He had almost forgotten his wife and children, nor did he care to return to his hopelessly mortgaged estate. He thought the storm was over and he might withdraw. He was told that the matter was not so simple. He would have to be represented by a lawyer before the consistory. Had he an advocate? He had none. In that case said the great man, he would appoint one to whom a letter must be sent. A secretary was called in and a letter dictated which the captain signed. Before he left, Fuchs asked him whether he were in need. Bellin, hardly knowing how it had happened, found himself possessed of an hundred thaler. He drank up and gambled away the greater part of it that night.

Arriving in Berlin after the long privations of the camp, Paul von Fuchs was determined to receive from Erdmute the final reward. She was profoundly obligated to him even so; knowing her situation, he had begged her to make use of

his purse. The utterly desolate woman could not refuse to promise to fulfill his wishes. But she besought him to consider her difficulties and put him off until the divorce should have been pronounced. Fuchs immediately sent her a jurist. He himself summoned the court advocate, Gering, to represent Bellin, making it clear that Bellin was not to be vigorously defended, nor the suit of the lady to be jeopardized. There being war, Fuchs declared that the defendant, who was an officer, could not appear.

In the presence of the consistory the two doctors of the law fought according to all the rules of the game, but it was not denied by either that the captain was a drunkard, gamester, blasphemer, and whoremaster who had reduced his family to beggary, threatened the life of his wife, and malevolently deserted her. The consistory should have granted the divorce. But the parsons were of an unparalleled stubbornness and demanded that the two parties to the action appear before them in person. Fuchs cursed the ecclesiastical blockheads, but sent a command that the captain be granted a leave of absence. Hardly had the letter been dispatched when the suit of Bellin *vs.* Bellin entered upon a new stage.

In Herr von Fuchs's desk there still lay the complaint of the eight preachers against the Secretary Altorf. Because he desired to ruin Altorf on account of the matter of Schwiebus, he had begun an action against the secretary on the ground of complicity in Knutsen's flight. But the Elector refused to have Altorf pursued and merely ordered him not to leave the city. He heard with pleasure that Danckelmann had thundered at Altorf in vain. The secretary kept his master's secret.

Fuchs re-read the charges concerning the escape of Knutsen. He pondered over the accusation that the atheist Altorf had illicit relations with a married woman and determined to

inquire into this matter. Two days later his spies reported that there was at court a certain Frau von Bellin who had long been Altorf's mistress and was probably still so. Rage robbed Fuchs of sleep. How foolish he had been to imagine the woman would wait for him. His first impulse was to hand the lovers over to public justice. But he dared not cause a scandal at court. He determined, however, to play the fool no more. If Erdmute desired him to continue his efforts in her behalf, she would have to pay the price at once. So soon as this end was gained the suit for divorce would have to be discontinued in order that she might not be endangered by the ecclesiastical pursuers of Altorf. The advocates were so instructed.

Toward the end of January the ragged, gray-haired Captain von Bellin turned up in the office of Herr Gering. The latter, knowing how to deal with people of all sorts, soon got rid of him and the muddle-headed captain found himself, before he knew it, back in the street. Opposite he observed a large house which many officers entered. He was told that it was the residence of General von Barfus. He had once known the general, too, and because he was all alone he joined the others and went in. He entered a large dirty waiting-room thronged with military men, many of whom were smoking pipes. Some had been waiting for weeks without gaining access to the general. Many hands were stretched out towards Bellin. The army had been shaken about and hundreds of officers knew one another. Here were men who had lost an arm or a foot and had not a farthing in their purses. Barfus was to help them. In Berlin the courtiers were stinking with money and so were the French. The honest Germans who had lost their limbs in the Elector's service were starving.

A group of officers, with Bellin among them, went back to

their quarters to drink a glass to the general's health. By evening they were all drunk except a certain captain of *füseliers* named Finke. All heads were hot and coarse jests began to fly, and Bellin was asked what the devil he was doing in the city. He mumbled something about a divorce and a damned advocate who had summoned him and thrown him out again. The company was not wholly uninformed. An old lieutenant of Frederic William's Polish cavalry cried out, "When the cock is gone the fox goes after the hen." In spite of the general drunkenness there was an immediate silence, and Bellin, suddenly suspicious, asked who was meant by the cock. Some one else laughed aloud and roared, "Cock is well, but cuckold is better." Bellin was on his feet. "Polish dog!" he cried and hit out with his sword, wounding the other in the arm. In the horrible confusion his sword was taken from him, but he raged so madly that six men could scarcely hold him and he offered to stab everyone. At last Finke succeeded in calming him.

Next morning the Adjutant Finke reported the matter to General von Barfus, who cursed in many languages and asked why he was annoyed with such trifles. Finke explained that it was not well for the reputation of the army that high-placed civilians should play fast and loose with the honor of an officer. Inquiries had proven that Frau von Bellin was generally considered to be Fuchs's mistress and that Captain von Bellin was a desperate man who had nothing to lose. Barfus remembered the man, but asked whether a Minister of State would consent to fight a duel with the captain, especially in view of the harsh law recently promulgated against dueling. The adjutant objected that the practice of dueling had, in fact, not stopped and that, if Herr von Barfus would take no hand in the affair there was nothing left but to permit

Bellin to pursue his own wild course. Barfus reflected. A case like this, he thought, ought to be laid before the Elector. In view of the great state masquerade planned for this evening, that was impossible. Finke proposed that Bellin's advocate be summoned, and soon, in fact, Gering was brought like a prisoner between two sergeants. When he heard that the life of Herr von Fuchs might be in actual danger he grew frightened and explained that the suit for divorce had been withdrawn because the lady had been guilty of unchaste conduct. Herr von Fuchs was quite innocent in the matter. The culprit was a certain Electoral secretary named Altorf. The general and the adjutant looked at each other. The advocate was dismissed. Finke set out to find the man who had injured Bellin.

Meantime Altorf was sitting in the house of Stosch with his friend and two guests. They were in the library, comfortably awaiting their dinner. The two guests were Thomasius and a Frenchman named Lacroze, who had recently arrived in Berlin, a stout man of thirty, plainly dressed. Lacroze was no Huguenot, but a former monk of the Benedictine Order expelled from his convent under the suspicion of unbelief. He earned his bread here by giving private lessons among the Huguenots. But he was also earning a high reputation for his marvelous learning and extraordinary memory. The hero of the little gathering was Christian Thomasius, who had just arrived. Summoned to Berlin, he had first been given a hundred ducats by the Elector as a reward for his courageous defense of the Princess Marie Amalia. Thereupon he was informed by Fuchs that, especially in view of Puffendorf's recommendation, he was to be given a definite appointment. Although the university in Halle was not to be opened formally until later, nevertheless Herr Thomasius might pro-

ceed thither at the beginning of the next semester and begin his lectures as professor of law. Thomasius recounted all these circumstances in a pleased and lively manner. His friends congratulated him. But Altorf said, with a bitter smile:

"According to that, dear Christian, you are now a full professor and a made man. You have, so to speak, an officially approved tongue and may talk as you like. We other poor devils may only speak when we are graciously commanded to do so. Stosch is scared to death about the publication of his book. M. Lacroze barely escaped eternal imprisonment or even worse. And I, my friend, am being pursued by the heretic-hunters of this land because I saved a poor knight of our natural conscience from torture and the gallows. What will become of your monthly journal? The public eagerly awaits each number."

"Its light will be snuffed out, Altorf. I dare no longer think of such trivial matters. But I have this reply to make to you: One may fight for reason even in a professor's chair."

"Not for reason in its purity, Thomasius. You fight, according to the command of the Privy-Council, against the unreason of the clerics, not against that of the world. Homeless wanderers, like my old friend Knutsen, fight against that unaided. In Knutsen's pamphlet it is written: 'We deny God; profoundly do we condemn the State: we reject all churches and their ministers!' Would you dare utter these words from your professorial chair?"

"I have no desire to utter them; they have no meaning."

"Be that as it may, I am determined to leave even this land that offers refuge to the free minds of France and of Saxony."

"Whither are you going?"

"If the Elector, as I hope, refuses to entertain the accusa-

tion of the zealots against me, I shall emigrate to North America."

"To join the redskins, eh?"

"It cannot be so bad; they, at least, are free. I plan to gather a little company of men for the experiment. Beside the Ohio or the Potomac there will be place for a few to live according to nature and conscience."

"Dreamer, how will you people be nourished?"

"We will live by the work of our hands, as the God of Jews and Christians has commanded."

"What think you, Herr Stosch, of this fantastical fellow?"

"Nay, Thomasius, rather do I call you fantastical who continue to sow upon the exhausted fields of Europe. Here we see naught but oppression and treachery, evil men and false-hearted women. Consider what lately a friend wrote me from Cracow: The last of the few free spirits in Poland who had hitherto escaped the Jesuits, Kasimir Liszynski, has been legally murdered. The Bishops of Wilna and Posen condemned him to death by fire as an atheist. They mercifully permitted him to be beheaded. But his body was burned and the ashes fired into the air from a cannon. Will you plead for reason in such a world?"

"But that is in Poland. We live under a magnanimous sovereign in a state of liberty."

"Liberty by the grace of a master! I would be free by my own grace."

At this moment it was announced that an officer was seeking Herr Altorf. His friends feared his arrest. But when he went out he was saluted by Captain Finke, who informed him that he was here on behalf of Captain von Bellin. Did Herr Altorf know the latter's wife? Suspecting the aim of the visit, he answered that he was not accustomed to replying to imperti-

nent questions. Finke bowed and said that this was the answer he had expected. But the matter being of the utmost importance to Herr von Bellin, the question arose whether the gentleman was prepared to defend his honor with his sword. Altorf said that he was prepared. Finke proposed that the duel take place in two hours at some place beyond the city. But since Altorf had been forbidden to pass the gates, a quiet place in the city would have to be found. This would require time. Hence the duel could not be fought until after dark, and Altorf requested that it take place at eleven o'clock, since he intended to catch at least a glimpse of the great festivity at the castle. Amazed at so much coolness, Captain Finke took his leave, while Altorf rejoined his friends with a cheerful mien.

(9)

THE banquet of state which preceded the masquerade and the mock village fair began at five o'clock and lasted for three hours. At the table of the sovereigns sat half a dozen high personages from other parts of the country and the princes and princesses of the house. The problem of precedence at the tables had been so intricate that various details had been submitted to the Elector himself for decision.

When at last Frederic gave the signal to rise, the company proceeded to the windows overlooking the river, and the lackeys were sent for furs and covers. Warmly wrapped, the people stood by the open windows and after the heavy wines and dishes inhaled the icy air with delight. Looking down, one saw the entire front of the castle illuminated by pitch torches which were reflected back in the frozen surface of the river and threw their light on the houses of the other shore. The music of bands and the hurraing of spectators resounded from below. The fireworks on the ice began with the hissing upward flight of two hundred rockets. Thereupon was to be seen a whale breathing fire from its nostrils, and thereafter a contraption that was to represent Mount Vesuvius spewing fire. Finally there were seen in the air brilliant but slowly fading letters which united to form the words Frederic and Sophie Charlotte, and above these a gigantic fiery image

of the Electoral hat. Still higher there was to be seen for a moment the brief glow of a royal crown.

While the fireworks continued for the amusement of the vulgar the court withdrew from the windows in order to go into the other part of the castle, where the mock village fair had been set up. The glittering procession, refreshed by the wintry air and very merry, streamed through the bright corridors between rows of lackeys in orange and silver and tall foot-guards on to the alabaster hall in which the pastoral festivities were to take place.

Thomas Altorf, determined to see Erdmute von Bellin once more, had arrived at the castle. He avoided the central court and the sentinels and crossing many passages reached that side of the alabaster hall which was opposite the entrance to the court. Here he had the good luck to meet Kornmesser, who permitted him to slip behind a wall of greenery that had been arranged and to watch the proceedings thence. In this corner the hall had been transformed into a grove. Pine trees had been brought in and blossoming bushes, and even exotic plants from the hothouses. This had been done to make the village scene seem natural. With backs against this wall of green stood the armchairs for the princely personages.

The procession that now entered was greeted by a primitive country music of squeaking flutes and fiddles. The Elector in full dress of red velvet heavily embroidered with gold led in his aunt, the Landgravine of Kassel. He wore his own Cross de la Générosité and on his left leg the blue garter of the English Order which the court admired for the first time today, a special envoy of King William having arrived with it only a week before. Sophie Charlotte, dressed in cloth of gold, accompanied the Prince Bishop of Münster, and Marie Amalia the Saxon Prince August. This young Hercules and

the Prince Bishop were the most elegant gentlemen present. The company lingered in front of the booths of the fair. Young chamberlains and ladies in waiting dressed in peasant garb offered ham and wine and tea and cake. Fishes were roasted on open fires. There were pigs' heads with figs and raisins in their snouts. There was a cow constructed of prunes led by a peasant-lass made of nuts; a chicken had been artistically carved out of a roast of veal and this chicken laid red and yellow boiled eggs. Another table bore a huge pasty which Sophie Charlotte was asked to cut. But she heard strange noises within it and gave the knife to the Prince Bishop. When the crust was broken a dozen little birds flew out and the high ladies screamed and the gentlemen shook with laughter and the frightened little birds flew and perched on the high window-moldings.

At the village fair proper, which was now to follow, everyone had been commanded to appear in costume. One by one, therefore, the guests left the hall in order to disguise themselves. They then reappeared to bow before the Electoral couple. There were to be seen the village mayor and his wife, the miller leading a live ass, the farmer and his man Martin who kept devouring buns. The village mayor, who was no other than Grumbkow, stepped forth and saluted the sovereign. Then Martin, who was really Besser the poet, began to perform tricks with a chair but ran off frightened at the appearance of the huge Turk Mustafa. Prince August, for he was the magnificent Turk, disdained to display his well-known strength, but bowed with crossed arms to Sophie Charlotte and was invited to a seat. Now peasant lassies with ribbons in their hair danced a comical dance with awkward country louts. Complaining of their noise, an apothecary appeared in a long, gold-trimmed scholar's cloak. In place of buttons he

had tiny medicine vials sewn to his coat, and instead of a rapier he carried a long syringe. This he flourished threateningly and emitted from it a thin stream of perfume. It was the poet Canitz who acted this part. A huge oaf approached whining over a pain in his belly. The apothecary commanded the fellow to poke out his tongue and was about to spill a white powder down the immense gullet, when the great miracle-working Doctor Piattomonte was announced by two acrobats that turned somersaults and four harlequins with bells in their caps. Piattomonte came in his blue magician's cloak sown with silver stars, and looked as majestic as Jove. It was none other than the Prince Bishop. He looked about for patients. Pöllnitz, acting the stupid peasant wench, showed him a swollen cheek. In vain he looked for his forceps, but, being a clever prestidigitator, brought a huge mass of objects out of the folds of his cloak. Into the hands of the harlequins he tossed glasses, tobacco-pipes, swords, and pistols, an unfurling flag of Brandenburg, and pigskin folio volumes. At last he produced the forceps, which proved to be huge blacksmith's pincers, out of his boot, approached Fräulein von Pöllnitz, and feigned to draw from her mouth a whale's tusk two feet long.

Now the Electoral Princess arose in order to change her costume. Frederic remained in the hall and the whole masquerade defiled in front of him. They were not only country people now, but also burghers and nobles, Venetians and Muscovites, Turks and Moors and Indians. Herr von Kolbe passed in the garb of a Turkish pasha, leading a veiled Oriental lady. A Persian princess, whispered the laughing crowd. Soon thereafter the Elector left the hall to costume himself likewise. Until his return the company in the alabaster hall jested and laughed and gossiped and prepared itself with a pleasant

titillation of anticipatory malice for the appearance of the figure of the scissors-grinder, traditional at such feasts.

It was mere pretense on the part of those present to seem to believe that Herr von Danckelmann had by mere accident drawn the lot which condemned him to act the part of the scissors-grinder. It was Herr von Kolbe's secret how the lots had been drawn. For at a mock village feast all men were equal and each had to act the part assigned to him by the lot he drew. The rôle of the scissors-grinder was always considered the most ungrateful one, all the more if it were taken by one who had many enemies and must therefore address the ironic verses traditional to the part to these and yet preserve an amiable manner. The devil only knew how Kasimir von Kolbe had played lot number thirteen into the hands of Danckelmann. Now Danckelmann was not one to enjoy a jest at his own expense. They wanted to make a fool of him, did they? He would pay them out! He commanded Besser to write the rough Alexandrine verses and bade him steep them in poison and in gall.

The beating of a drum announced the scissors-grinder. Thunderous ironic laughter greeted his appearance. The cart with the whetstone was drawn in by a genuine gypsy picked up on the road and put into clean garments. Behind him came the Prime Minister in the yellow cloth cap and old-fashioned yellow smock of his supposed trade. The gypsy, blinded and frightened by the light and the brilliant company, forgot his cart and lingered by the door. Danckelmann, red with rage, kicked him into the middle of the hall. There he stood and turned his wheel and the sparks flew. The rôles of customers of the scissors-grinder had been assigned exclusively to members of the Berlin court. First approached, sumptuously dressed in the garb of a Roman magnifico, the Elector him-

self, leading by the arm Madame von Krosigk. The scissors-grinder pronounced a reverential platitude and let the couple pass. Compliments were also bestowed upon the young marriages and the Prince von Anhalt. Next came Count Dönhoff as a gardener with a lady who was none other than Sophie Charlotte. The scissors-grinder jeered at Dönhoff. Why did he slink up so lamely. Had his garden knife grown so dull? The lovely gardener's lass beside him probably knew some one who had a better knife. Now it was clear that Danckelmann was set on revenge.

A chamberlain came next with Madame von Grumbkow, both dressed as rat-catchers. The lady got her share. She was reputed to have an unpleasant breath. "Rat-catcher," Danckelmann said, "how easily you drive your trade! Your wife blows on the rats and they are poisoned." But there was little laughter over the coarse jest, for the Grumbkows were powerful.

Then came Canitz's turn, who was acting the part of the apothecary. The good-natured poet was very badly treated. He had recently inherited the estates of his mother. "Sir Syringe, why not buy sharp knives? You might need them to scrape pretty powders and get yourself new inheritances!" Canitz stood still for a moment. But he controlled himself and went on, while Danckelmann looked about him for new customers. The last of these were Herr von Kolbe and Herr von Fuchs. That Danckelmann would show no mercy to these was clear from his harsh attack upon the mild Canitz. The company became infected by his bitter mood. A sour and rebellious spirit stole into the hall and all pressed forward to get a better view of the scissors-grinder's face. Wild laughter over the ugly jests revealed more and more clearly the coteries and cabals of the court. Kasimir von Kolbe now

approached, no longer as a pasha but as a court cook in a white coat and an enormously tall white cap. In his hand he carried a spit. His smile was forced as though he were a little afraid. With an ironical bow the scissors-grinder harangued him: "How many holes, both great and small, oh, famous cook, have you not made with your spit! Yet you do not marry! Is anything amiss? 'Tis we who can grind the spit and give it a new edge."

Led by the Prince Bishop the assembly roared with laughter. Heated by food and wine and merriment, not even the presence of the Electoral couple commanded restraint or seemliness any more. There were those who wished devoutly that the farce were at an end. But still that terrible yellow figure stood there, seething with wrath. The Elector's favorite, Kolbe, had gotten his share. Now came the last victim, the woman-chaser, who had dared to oppose Danckelmann in open council. Through the rows of the mummers approached Herr von Fuchs with Frau von Bellin. He had anticipated the triumph of showing the beautiful lady to the entire court as obviously under his protection. He had spared no expense. Her costume alone had cost a thousand thaler. The two were garbed as a noble betrothed couple of imperial Nürnberg burghers. The icy glances of the lookers-on wounded Erdmute to the heart. Mechanically she walked on and met the eye of her former mistress, Marie Amalia. Haughtily the latter turned away. In her confusion Erdmute dropped her kerchief and at the same moment heard the loud merciless words of the scissors-grinder flung into her face: "Good sir, 'tis you who meddle with my trade by whetting the plump little lady till the sparks fly! It seems that you are fond of grazing on strange pastures; for if I am not wrong your bride, good sir, is pregnant." The whole alabaster hall seemed to Erdmute

to be a single jeering cry. Seething with rage, Fuchs hurried her away.

The Elector arose and offered his arm to his wife. He regarded no one, but his evident irritation communicated itself to the assembly, which became sobered and embarrassed. The scissors-grinder had departed and the masters of ceremonies hurried through the hall in order to arrange the figures for the dance. A solemn pavane was to open the formal ball.

Thomas Altorf had hurried from his hiding-place and leaped down the stairs. At the corner of the castle he met Captain Finke and another officer, who offered to be his second. Altorf accepted the offer and the three made their way to the near-by fishermen's quarter beside the frozen river. Here a fisherman led them across the broad ice, past the fishing-holes that had been cut, to the other shore, where Bellin with his companions waited. The scene of the duel was to be a shed in which the fishermen kept their nets. The place was a lonely one, yet were soldiers stationed about the shed in order to keep people away. Altorf and the officers entered. By the dim light of a lantern he recognized the huge form of his opponent. Bellin, stripped to the waist and smoking a pipe, paid no attention to the preparations. An aged major who acted as umpire stepped forth and said that the duel between Captain von Bellin and Herr Altorf was to be fought out by torch-light with long rapiers, and that no quarter was to be given. He summoned four sergeants of his regiment, who stood holding the lighted torches. The first round passed with no blood drawn; Altorf made the observation that his opponent fenced too wildly. In the second round he ran his rapier into Bellin's chest, but the steel snapped off against a rib. A terrible scene ensued. The bleeding giant threw himself upon the unarmed

Altorf, who leaped aside. The seconds cried out that the captain should lower his sword. But he, roaring like a bull, turned upon them and pressed them back against the wall. Half sunk to the ground, he turned once more with lightning speed and from below thrust his rapier clean through Altorf's body.

★(10)★

ALL fashionable Berlin lay abed late on the morning after the most sumptuous festivity that the castle had ever witnessed. The coaches of the guests had not left until three o'clock in the morning. But at four the night watchmen found the Secretary Altorf lying on a heap of snow in front of the door of St. Peter's Church. The frozen body was decently wrapped in a long cloak, and a shawl had been wound about the head.

Later in the day General von Barfus informed the Elector, who had already heard of the finding of the body, that Altorf had come to his end in an honorable duel with the profoundly affronted Captain von Bellin. Bellin was still alive, but was wounded beyond hope of recovery. Therefore, Herr von Barfus reported, the law against dueling could not well be invoked. The Elector listened in great vexation. But he sent a message to Frau Erdmute von Bellin that she was to leave the capital within a week.

Thomas Altorf was buried in a garden outside of the city which belonged to the family of Stosch. It was not to be expected that the self-confessed atheist was to be permitted burial in consecrated ground. Only his friends Stosch and Thomasius and the poverty-stricken French scholar Lacroze were present. On the way to the grave Stosch intended to speak a few words in memory of his friend. But they all

feared the gossip of the grave-diggers, who had been persuaded with difficulty to put a heretic into the earth. Thus the burial was silent.

Returning thence to his inn, Thomasius found the document from the Elector instating him as professor of law in the future university of Halle.

In the castle the bitter mummery had left an acrid after-taste. The Elector was wroth with Kolbe, Danckelmann, Fuchs, and his wife. Had the distinguished guests not been present, he would have vented his evil mood more audibly. Sophie Charlotte spent her time in drives and at concerts and in elegant conversation. No one considered what was to become of poor Erdmute von Bellin except the Duke Morris William von Zeitz, who, after quiet inquiry, brought the unfortunate lady into his wife's presence. Erdmute kneeled at the feet of Marie Amalia and was graciously bidden to arise.

Having been invited by his Zeitz friends to travel with them, Thomasius went one evening to take leave of his great friend Samuel von Puffendorf. The historian was sitting wrapped in a huge gray Swedish fur coat and looked like a mountain. He could not arise on account of the gout in his leg. At a glance from her Jovian husband Madame Puffendorf disappeared. Thomasius announced his appointment as Brandenburg councilor and professor.

"Gratulamur! gratulamur!" All the more since we had some influence on the happy outcome. I trust that the salary is satisfactory?"

"More than satisfactory, sir. I am granted five hundred thaler a year, more than I had expected."

"Not bad to begin with, and Halle is cheap. But an academic man in these days must follow the fashion. I observe with pleasure that your coat is of fine cloth and that you

carry a sword like any gentleman. We can no longer live like that old Professor Crusius of Tübingen, who, when the leathern breeches he had worn for fifteen years showed a broken seam, complained that tailors were not what they had once been."

Since his guest seemed quieter than usual, Puffendorf said:

"Considering your good luck, my dear young colleague, you are almost too quiet and well-poised. Or has anything happened?"

Thomasius related the sad end of his friend Altorf, concerning which Puffendorf had not been informed but which made only a feeble impression on the great man.

"I saw this Herr Altorf once. A mediocre head. He wanted to instruct me concerning the natural rights and liberties of the mob. A love-affair, eh? Things like that happen in Paris and Venice every night. Berlin is a growing city and will have its share."

Reverentially Thomasius ventured to reply:

"I do not contradict you, sir. My friend was hot-headed and impulsive. But I honored his sincerety and his glowing reverence for the human reason to which you, great sir, have dedicated your life and also, *magno intervallo*, I myself."

The smile with which Puffendorf listened to his disciple was Olympian but not without indulgence. Thunderously he blew his nose in order to clear his voice for a final admonition.

"The reason, young friend, has many worshipers, some of whom are unreasonable. As the Church of Christ must protect itself against feeble dreamers, so must the church of reason. Many a glowworm burns brightly for a moment and then goes out. Upon such there is no reliance. You yourself once had such errant inclinations. Permit an old friend the remark that you should now make an end to such things. You

have proven yourself the wittiest head in Germany. You have now something better to do. A great state intrusts you and no more the parsons to instruct its future servants. It is for you now to fulfill the high duty assigned you. I, too, have fought under the banner of reason all my life and swore even in my student days to liberate the reason from the power of the clerics. But reason is a woman! Under right discipline and guidance she will make an excellent wife; permitted to wander at will she becomes a whore. We take her from the priests and preachers and must give her another husband. Who shall that be except he who preserves the law and order of the land? Good night, Herr Thomasius. You are being made the steward of a noble property. I know that you will not some day stand before our lord and master like that slothful and unprofitable servant of whom the Gospel speaks."

Thomasius listened to this lecture without the quiver of an eyelash.

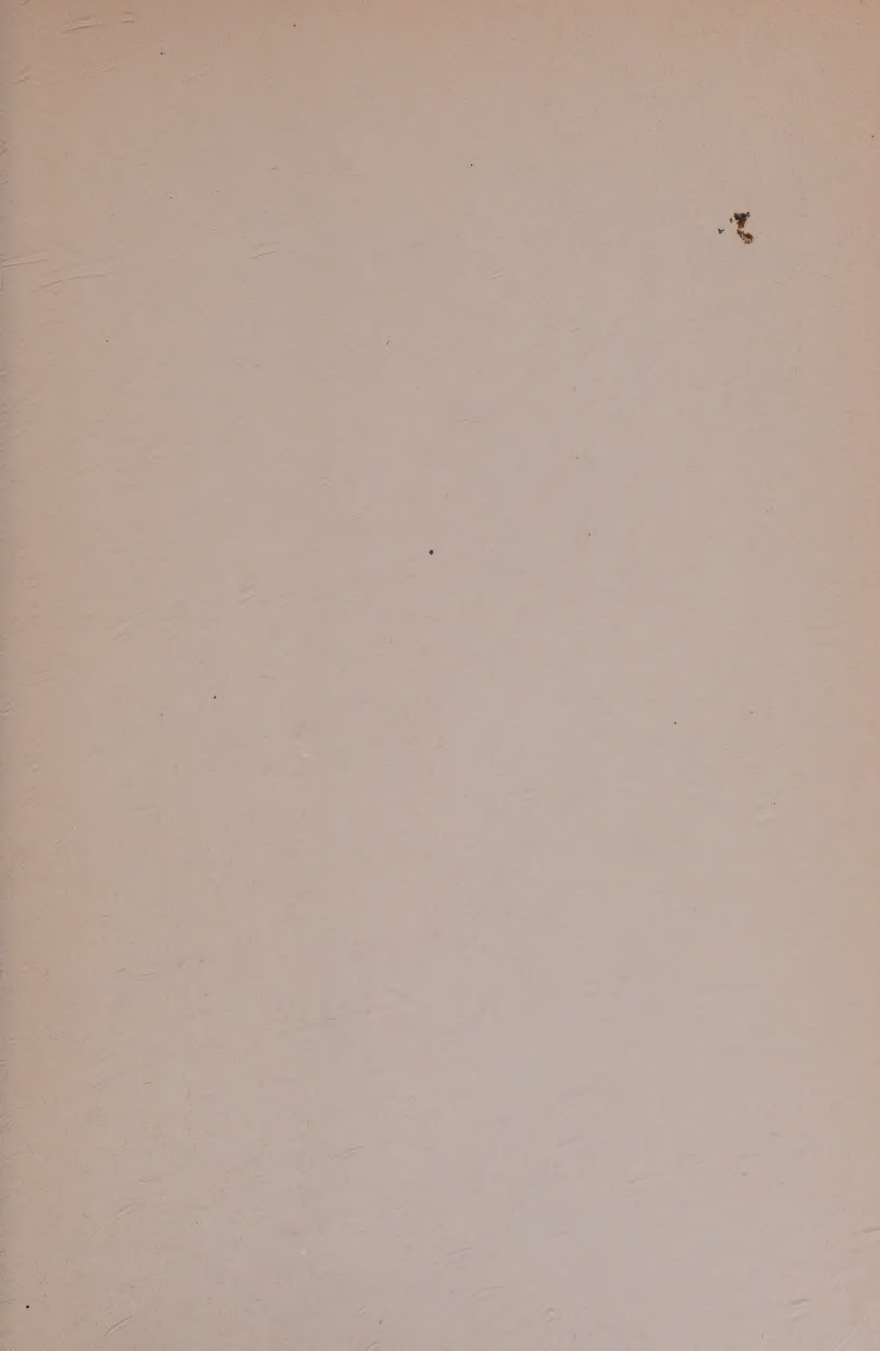
On the third morning thereafter the Duke and Duchess of Zeitz departed for their capital. The new professor and Frau von Bellin and two maids of the Duchess followed in a second carriage. Erdmute remained only one day at Zeitz; she retired to a near-by ducal estate to await the further decision of her friends.

Before reaching Leipzig, which he had still to avoid, Herr Thomasius took his leave of the ducal couple and by a circuitous route went to Halle to survey the scene of his future labors. Within a few weeks he brought thither his family from Leipzig and hired a house. The rumor concerning the new university at which no less a man than Christian Thomasius was to be the first to lecture spread rapidly through the center of Germany. Not a few of his Leipzig adherents followed him. But the fiery young professor also attracted

many a good student from the universities of Wittenberg, Jena, Altorf, and Helmstedt. The academic foundation of Frederic the Third at once awakened the fondest hopes and on a certain Monday after Trinity Professor Thomasius gave his first lecture before a considerable audience.

THE END







LUDWIG
LEWISOHN
says of
AMBITION

By
BERNHARD GUTTMANN

(Continued from Front Flap)

the modern reader with an absorbing and unbroken reality of impression. It is not too much to say that the reader is again and again reminded of Fielding and of Smollet at their best and revels in the nutty concreteness of this novel's abundant life.

"The central character on one plane is that sickly, deformed son of the Great Elector of Prussia whose long and tireless ambition for a royal crown made Berlin for decades the center of European intrigue from which threads stretched to Paris, to Vienna and finally to the London of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and to Holland where William of Orange prepared his expedition to England. On another plane the chief characters are those tragic lovers, the secretary Altdorf and the exquisite and ill-starred Erdmute von Bellin. Around the central characters on both planes there live and breathe and have their being a company of human creatures which few modern novelists have surpassed in reality and living force.

"A superbly rich, vital and moving book."

HARPER & BROTHERS
Publishers

New

HARPER

Fiction

SHEPHERDS IN SACKCLOTH by Sheila Kaye-Smith
Author of "Joanna Godden"

There are enduring qualities in Sheila Kaye-Smith's work which place it beside Thomas Hardy's, and this new novel, set in the corner of the world which she has made her own, is the story of a country parish, unified by the truly shepherd-like devotion of its rector. Youth and age, the flesh and the spirit meet in poignant contrast here, and are bound together in a profoundly moving and very beautiful story.

ANGEL PAVEMENT by J. B. Priestley
Author of "The Good Companions"

In this long rich novel, as in *The Good Companions*, you come to know a host of delightful characters. You are transported bodily to their London, to Angel Pavement, a little thoroughfare tucked away in the city. And here J. B. Priestley proves that adventure does not always stalk the high road. He pictures Angel Pavement with all the realistic detail and delicious humor and warmth that has already made his previous book a modern classic.

THE REDLAKES by Francis Brett Young
Author of "My Brother Jonathan"

Here Francis Brett Young returns to the manner of *My Brother Jonathan* and *Portrait of Claire*, and gives to his army of admirers the long novel for which they have been asking. The story of Jim Redlake, his youth, his first passionate love affair, his struggle toward manhood, and finally his maturity, born of war and suffering, is a full-bodied chronicle of English life, ranging in scope from the Leicestershire hunting country to the African veldt.

A RICH MAN'S DAUGHTER by R. H. Mottram
Author of "The Spanish Farm"

Winner of the Hawthornden Prize, author of *The Spanish Farm* trilogy, R. H. Mottram is one of England's most notable writers. In this new book he gives us the love story of Geoffrey Skene, hero of *The Spanish Farm*, and Olive, the rich man's daughter. Essentially a romance, this book also depicts the transition from war to peace, revealing all the problems of the service man's emotional and practical readjustments.

RACHEL MOON by Lorna Rea
Author of "Six Mrs. Greenes"

Six Mrs. Greenes immediately established Lorna Rea as a writer of tremendous power and popular appeal; its publication was an important literary event. Here she tells one woman's story with all the wealth of understanding that in her previous book she distributed among six. She has drawn a full length portrait, delicate and subtle, quick in its understanding, overflowing with tenderness for youth and young love, and yet without a trace of sentimentality.

HARPER & BROTHERS Publishers New York, N. Y.